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Celebrity pg 30

Gwyneth helping Madge through divorce

Calling city hall to be as easy as 3-1-1

24-HR. NUMBER The onerous blue pages will become obsolete once Vancouver's 3-1-1 non-emergency phone service is implemented by the end of 2009.

"Five hundred and fifty municipal numbers will shrink to one," said Mayor Sam Sullivan yesterday at a forum hosted by the Downtown Business Improvement Association.

Vancouver citizens can call the 24-hour number for any municipal issue ranging from reporting graffiti and lost cellphones to requesting city services.

The system will cost the city $12.3 million in capital spending to set up and $5.3 million in annual operating costs.

Telus was awarded the $7-million contract to install and support the system and contact centre sites.

MONICA MARTINEZ / FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Games

- During the Olympics in 2010, the city will collaborate with TransLink and Vanoc to redirect calls that should go to them.

RAFE ARNOTT/METRO VANCOUVER

Canada's Women's Speed Skating Team tests the ice at the Richmond Oval yesterday. The 2010 venue opens to the public on Dec. 12.

Sharpen your skates for turn on the Oval

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

The professionals have given their seal of approval, and now it's the public's turn to lace up and test-drive the 400-metre ice track at the Richmond Oval.

Construction of the venue will officially finish on Dec. 12, and to celebrate the milestone residents will get to experience what it'll be like for the world's fastest skaters when they race for Gold during the 2010 Games.

Ingrid Paul, one of the coaches for the Canadian speedskating team, said yesterday the huge amount of natural light and massive wood beam roof make the venue one of the most unique she's ever seen.

"It's almost like skating outside, and with the view of the mountains and water … it's really beautiful," she said.

Paul was there with eight of Canada's top male and female speedskaters, who tried the track as part of an ongoing process of evaluating and improving the ice.

She said speedskaters are sensitive to small inconsistencies in the ice, and builders are still searching for the right water and air temperature to make it more consistent.

"In training it's not so important, but if you want to have a high level of races, it's got to be perfect," she said. "And it will be perfect before 2010."

Richmond venue

- During the Olympics, the Oval will seat around 8,000 spectators and will be home to up to 12 medal speedskating events.
- The venue will have comprehensive recreation facilities, including eight basketball courts, volleyball courts, an indoor field and fitness studios.

ShareYourViews
vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Ritz condos hit bedrock

EXCAVATION Construction at one of Vancouver's most prestigious new condominiums, the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton, has ground to a halt because excavation crews ran into bedrock.

"What's happening right now is (the developer's) run into this problem, and he's going to have to figure out what he's doing going forward," said Jay Mitchell, deputy superintendent of real estate at the Financial Institutions Commission.

Earlier yesterday, there was speculation that construction was stopped due to the effects of the world economic meltdown.

At the corner of West Georgia and Bute Streets, no work crews showed up and signs had been stripped from the building's side.

Bob Rennie, the owner of Rennie Marketing Systems, the company handling the luxury condo's sales, said that while he wasn't told by Holborn Holdings owner Simon Lim when construction would resume, he was only authorized to say that construction was stopped because of modifications to the building's parkade and is "not being re-evaluated because of sales."

Currently, just over half of the units that range in price from $3-million to $28.8-million have been sold.

Vancouver-based architect Arthur Erickson designed the $500-milllion 60-storey twist-scaper. The bottom 20 floors will contain 127 hotel rooms, and the top 38 floors will house 123 condo units.

MARIA COOTAUCO / FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Small Business pg 10

Biz with pals can be risky

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Maui Christmas FROM **$1659**
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INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 3-star all-inclusive accom. **UPGRADE** to 4-star accom from $28 per night.

Puerto Plata 4-Star FROM **$598**
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. **ADD** Outback safari from $92.

Rocky Mountains Fly & Drive FROM **$659**
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare into Calgary and return from Edmonton, a 6-day car rental with unlimited mileage and 2 nights accom at the 5-star Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel.

Manzanillo 4-Star FROM **$698**
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom.

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INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 3.5-star all-inclusive accom. **UPGRADE** to 4-star from $40 per night.

Mayan Riviera 4-Star FROM **$698**
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Punta Cana 4-Star FROM **$798**
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. **ADD** deep-sea fishing from $109.

Costa Rica 4-Star FROM **$948**
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. **UPGRADE** to oceanview accom from $27 per night. **ADD** Buena Vista rainforest combo tour from $131.

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Copperfield brings spectacle to city
Illusionist David Copperfield will perform the first of eight shows at the Centre In Vancouver For Performing Arts tomorrow. He'll be in town until Sunday. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Local

Trainer hits (air) waves

The former head trainer for dolphins at the Vancouver Aquarium, Christopher Porter, is the subject of a CBC documentary that airs tomorrow on swim-with-the-dolphin parks. In the film, Porter is shown capturing dolphins and selling them for $100,000 each while Ric O'Barry, former dolphin trainer on the TV show Flipper, tries to shut him down. METRO VANCOUVER

Union starts campaign for better buses in city

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

Expect your bus driver to start announcing more than just the upcoming stops today.

The Bus Driver's Union yesterday launched a multimedia advertising campaign, which includes driver outreach to passengers, urging the provincial government to improve bus service in the area.

Don MacLeod, president of Canadian Auto Workers Local 111, said bus riders have to deal with overcrowded buses, long delays, pass-ups and inadequate service because Metro Vancouver is short at least 500 buses.

"Anyone who has ridden a bus recently knows how desperate the situation is," he said. "And with high gas prices and environmental concerns, bus ridership is only going to go up.

"That's why the province's top priority should be fixing the bus shortage immediately before looking at more rapid transit — not the other way around."

Going digital

- The campaign also includes advertising, a Facebook group and a website, morebusesnow.com, where transit users can write a letter to the provincial government and local MLAs.

News in brief

PARKS The Vancouver Park Board's general manager is asking that plans to tear down Stanley Park's Hollow Tree be delayed until an independent engineering firm can assess its stability. The ancient tree was seriously damaged during the 2006 windstorms.
METRO VANCOUVER

RAFE ARNOTT / METRO VANCOUVER

Premier Gordon Campbell, flanked by B.C. Housing Minister Rich Coleman, speaks about Olympic legacy housing at VANOC headquarters in Burnaby yesterday.

Village to become homes

Part of Whistler's Olympic village will be turned into low-income housing in six communities after the 2010 Games, Olympic organizers and the province announced yesterday.

In all, 320 temporary modular housing units, part of Whistler's athlete's village, will be turned into 156 units of permanent, affordable housing.

The modular housing will cost $18.2 million, with VANOC covering $9.4 million. Following the Games the province will spend $20 million transporting and converting the units into permanent housing in Surrey, Sechelt, Saanich, Chilliwack, Enderby and Chetwynd. The total cost is $43.6 million.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

JEFF HODSON / METRO VANCOUVER

Ex-Olympian still seeks ring

THEFT A former Olympian living in North Vancouver is asking for help finding a one-of-a-kind ring she lost while gardening in May, police announced yesterday.

Lisa Borsholt, a swimmer who competed in women'a breaststroke races at the 1976 and 1984 Games, said the gold ring is topped with the five interlinked Olympic rings.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the North Vancouver RCMP.
METRO VANCOUVER

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What's online today.

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Check movie showtimes, trailers and reviews at metronews.ca/movies
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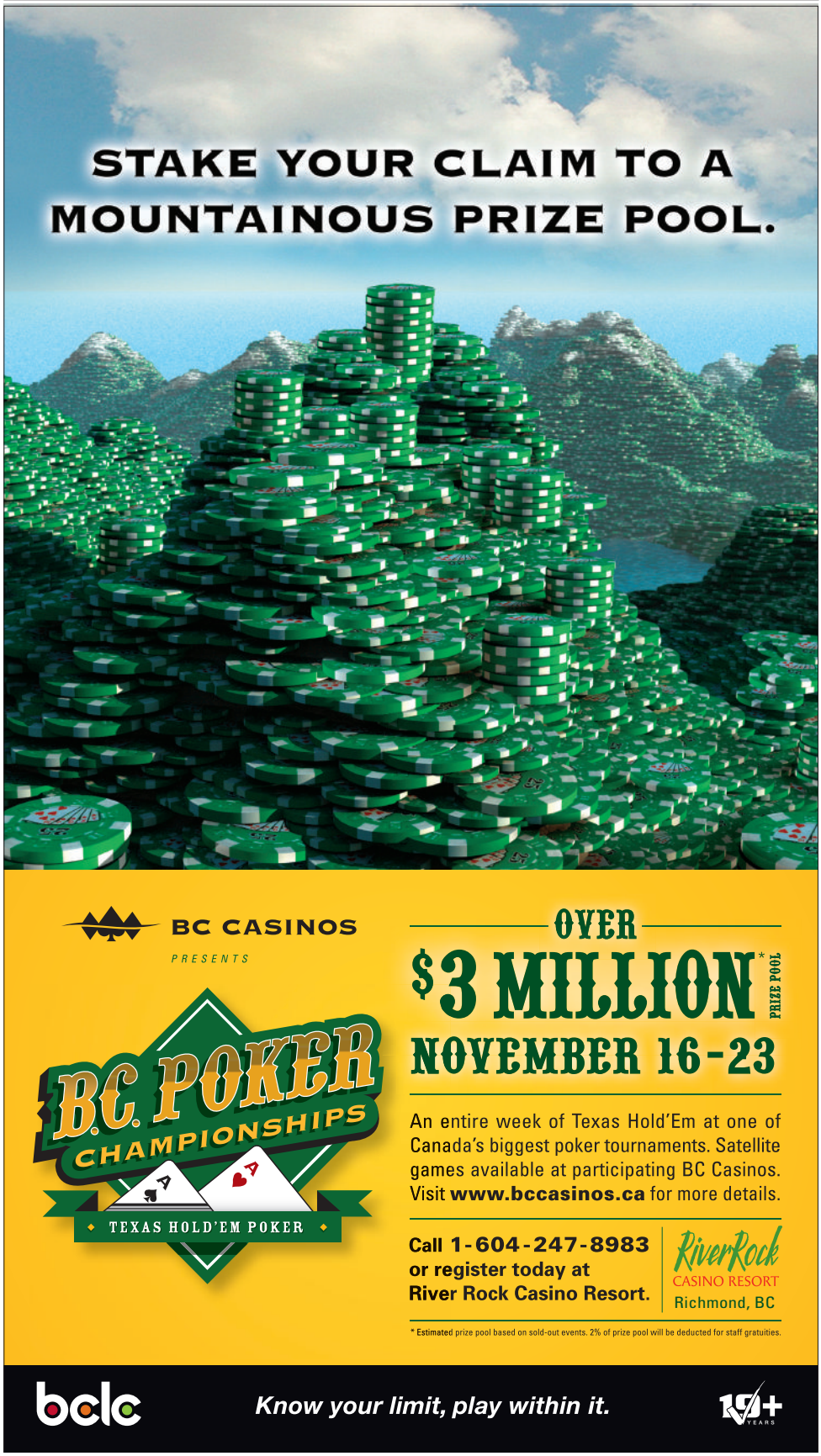
Canada

Gamers favour Vancouver Film School
The Vancouver Film School has been named one of the Top 10 schools favoured by video game industry recruiters, according to the L.A. Times. More than 200 schools across North America were considered and VFS is the only Canadian entry to make the Top 10. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

SHOOTING A 28-year-old man is dead after being shot in what police said yesterday was likely a targeted hit in Abbotsford, cknw.com reports. The man, whose name has not been released, was found in a stairwell at the World Extreme Fighting Gym. Police said he had gang affiliations.

CHARGES A Washington state man was arrested for allegedly assaulting two Delta Police officers, news1130.com reports. Police said Gerhard Krahn, 27, attacked the officers after they drove him to the border because he was drunk. One suffered a concussion; the other a fractured wrist. METRO NEWS SERVICES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Criminals targeting seniors

Officer's mother a victim

MARIA COOTAUCO
for Metro Vancouver

A string of crimes against seniors in the past few days hit close to home for Vancouver Police spokesman Tim Fanning when his elderly mother was the victim of a break and enter last week.

Ronald Feenstra, 48, was arrested after Fanning's 82-year-old mother identified him out of a photo pack as the man who broke into her Vancouver home Thursday night as she dozed in the living room.

Other incidents include:

- On Friday, a man stole two rings and a wallet from an 80-year-old woman who let him into her home.
- Later on Friday, a would-be thief tried to wrench a purse twice from the hands of a 72-year-old woman being pushed in a wheelchair by her 77-year-old husband.
- On Sunday, a man stole a wallet and pushed an 85-year-old woman to the ground.
- On Monday, an 84-year-old woman chased a man who stole her purse, but didn't catch him.
- At least eight seniors were targeted by wallet thieves who pretended to help elderly men after spilling food on them.

ShareYourViews
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Brazilian filmmakers eye 'Hollywood North'

MONICA MARTINEZ
for Metro Vancouver

FESTIVAL Vancouver's first Brazilian Film Festival opens today at Vancity Theatre, but don't expect to find any movies on Rio's "favelas" or slums.

Instead, the 15 feature, documentary and animated films focus on themes of music, religion, love and betrayal. There will also be a special tribute to renowned cinematographer, Walter Carvalho, on Sunday night.

"We will present our diverse identity to Canada."
Laura Marques, event co-ordinator

"With Brazilian cinema we will present our diverse identity to Canada," said Laura Marques, event co-ordinator with Inffinito Group who created and produced the festival.

Shown at eight other cities worldwide, Vancouver was chosen because it's known as "Hollywood North."

"There are a lot of co-productions between Canada and Brazil. We want to connect with Canadian filmmakers," she said.

The Dead Girl's Feast
THURSDAY, 9:30 P.M.

Santinho rises to saint status in his community after performing a miracle upon the suicide of his mother. The film depicts people's capacity for fabricating faith and finding sense in a horrifying experience.

The Incurable Ones
SATURDAY, 7 P.M.

This movie is about a man, a woman, a cheap hotel room, a game with no rules, one night only. Each does not know who the other is and, therefore, can be whoever they want.

My Name Ain't Johnny
SATURDAY, 9:30 P.M.

A bohemian, middle class guy falls into the drug trade in the early 1990s, eventually running Rio de Janeiro's affluent southern zone.

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Twenty families signed on to Maple Leaf lawsuit

Affidavits were filed in six provinces this week as part of a planned class-action lawsuit against Maple Leaf Foods Inc. Twenty families have signed on to the suit alleging a family member died as a result of eating listeriosis-tainted meat. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canada

Mexico OKs Alberta beef

Mexico has lifted a two-month ban on live cattle imported from Alberta, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said yesterday. Trade in breeding cattle born after January 1999 has resumed, the Agriculture Department said in a statement. Mexico imposed the ban after Canada found its 14th case of mad cow disease in August. REUTERS

News in brief

DEFICIT The worldwide financial crisis will tip Ontario into a "small" budget deficit this year, forcing the postponement of planned new government programs, sources said on the eve of today's economic statement.

UN Canadian activist Maude Barlow has been appointed as the United Nation's first senior adviser on water issues, a role she hopes to use to establish water as a human right and to convince Canada to "change its shameful position" on the issue, CBC News Online reports.

SIGNALS JAMMED The federal cabinet authorized the RCMP to use counter-terrorism radio jammers to prevent bomb attacks at the international summit in Quebec City last week, government documents show, CBC News Online reports. RCMP declined to comment on the measure that was approved less than two weeks before the summit.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canadian info likely led to torture: Inquiry

Canadian security services probably contributed indirectly to the torture in Syria of three Arab Canadians who had been suspected of involvement in terrorist activities, an official inquiry found yesterday.

Frank Iacobucci, who headed the commission that conducted the inquiry, concluded after interviewing the men that they had been tortured through a variety of means, including beatings with electric cables and being kicked in the genitals.

"Torture is a pernicious practice that is just beyond any kind of defence," said Iacobucci, a former Supreme Court judge.

The government-appointed inquiry covered the cases of Canadian-Egyptian Ahmad El Maati, Canadian-Syrian Abdullah Almalki and Canadian-Iraqi Muayyed Nureddin, who were arrested separately entering Syria between 2001 and 2003.

Iacobucci said mistreatment of the men did not result directly from any Canadian action, but Canadian officials indirectly led to the torture of El Maati and Almalki and likely also to that of Nureddin.

REUTERS

CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS

Stockwell Day leaves a news conference in Ottawa yesterday after it was revealed that Canadian security services probably contributed indirectly to the Syrian torture of three Arab Canadians.

Watch a video related to this story at metronews.ca/canada

U.S. consulate prepares for 2010 Olympic Games

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

OLYMPICS Security, visa issues and border traffic during the 2010 Winter Olympics are among the top priorities of new U.S. Consul General Phillip Chicola.

"We are in very unusual situation, vis-à-vis the Winter Olympics," said Chicola, who began his three-year assignment in Vancouver in August.

Phillip Chicola

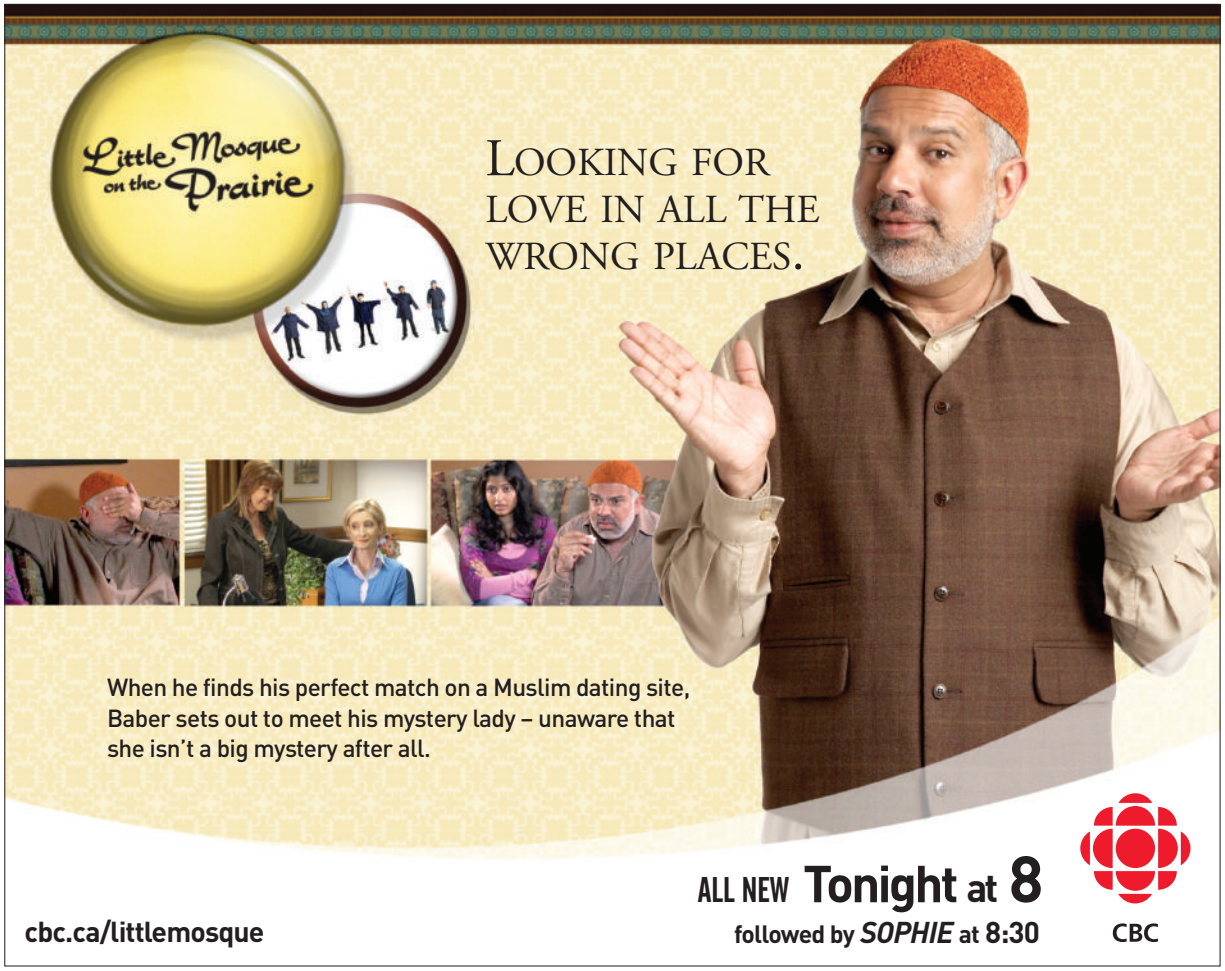
"There are several million Americans living a relatively short drive from the Olympic sites, but it's a different country with a border."

Among his concerns are lineups at the border as people from Washington state drive north to take in Olympic events.

Border security remains of high importance as well, he said, and information is exchanged between the two countries at a federal and provincial level.

However Chicola said the wellbeing of American citizens in Canada should not be a big issue for the consulate in 2010 — because of Vancouver's geographic closeness to the U.S. and institutional similarities between the two countries.

"If somebody gets sick — in many parts of the world — you don't want your people going to any hospital. Here, I don't think anybody would be worried if somebody in an emergency was taken to any reasonable Canadian medical facility."


Little Mosque on the Prairie
LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES.
When he finds his perfect match on a Muslim dating site, Baber sets out to meet his mystery lady – unaware that she isn't a big mystery after all.
ALL NEW Tonight at 8
followed by SOPHIE at 8:30
CBC
cbc.ca/littlemosque

Kyoto legal challenge fails

COURT Environmentalists have lost a legal challenge to force the federal government to abide by the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, which Canada signed but has refused to implement.

The Federal Court Monday dismissed a lawsuit filed by Friends of the Earth Canada that alleged the government broke the law by missing deadlines for implementing the treaty.

The judge ruled it is not up to the court to decide if Ottawa acted reasonably in failing to meet its commitments.

Searching for Arctic ice's expiry date

SEA ICE Pen Hadow, the first person to walk solo from Canada to the North Pole without aircraft resupplies, is to return to the Pole in an attempt to establish when Arctic summer sea ice will disappear for good.

Claims

- Russia has already claimed half of the Arctic sea bed.

The receding ice has proved a battleground for countries in the region as they race to stake claims on some of the richest untapped mineral and marine resources on the planet. REUTERS

India launching moon mission today
India will launch its first unmanned moon mission today, following in the footsteps of rivals China and Japan, as it tries to show off its scientific know-how and claim a bigger chunk of the global space business. REUTERS

World

Russia releases finance deputy

Russia released a deputy finance minister yesterday pending his trial for embezzlement, a move that may show Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin has checked attempts to undermine his position. Sergei Storchak, left, who oversaw Russia's debt and its $163-billion oil wealth fund, was arrested last November and accused of attempting to embezzle $43 million in a complex deal with foreign debts owed to Russia. REUTERS

Celebs boost U.S. youth vote

Initiatives by celebrities like Beyoncé Knowles, Christina Aguilera and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs to persuade young people to vote have been successful, research showed yesterday.

"Celebrities have the power to motivate civic engagement regardless of their own grasp of the issues at hand," according to a study by Washington State University published in the Mass Communication and Society journal.

The study, based on a survey of 305 students at the university, contrasted with a number of other polls which indicated celebrity endorsements of presidential candidates were unlikely to sway votes.

It said: "Celebrity-endorsed campaigns successfully lowered complacency and helped young people believe in their own impact on the political system. Young people got involved at higher levels and became increasingly aware of societal issues."

Sean Combs

The study, led by Erica Austin, researched the influence of "get out the vote" campaigns in 2004 involving Knowles, Aguilera, Combs and other celebrities. It quoted a 2004 Pace University poll which showed 44 per cent of newly registered voters were ages 18 to 25.

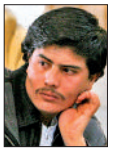
The study found that "the cause of this dramatic increase in voter participation of young people in 2004 can largely be attributed to celebrity get-out-the-vote promotions." REUTERS

Youth voter turnout

- About 44 million people aged 18 to 29 are eligible to vote in the Nov. 4 presidential election. If young voter turnout exceeded 50 per cent, it would be only the third time since the voting age was lowered to 18 in 1972. Turnout among young voters peaked at 55 per cent in 1972.

Journalist has death penalty commuted

COURTS Afghanistan's appeal court sentenced an Afghan journalist to 20 years in jail, commuting an earlier death sentence, for distributing an Internet article that said the Prophet Muhummad had ignored the rights of women.


Permiz Kambakhsh

Perwiz Kambakhsh, 23, a reporter with the Jahan-e Now daily, was sentenced to death in January by a court in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. The arrest and sentencing of Kambakhsh, also a university student, drew criticism from a number of Western nations, the Afghan media and rights groups. Kambakhsh downloaded an Iranian article from the Internet and distributed it to friends.

"The court has sentenced Mr. Perwiz Kambakhsh to 20 years jail for the crime he has committed. But this is not the final hearing — he has the right to appeal," judge Abdul Salaam Qazizada told the court.

Under Islamic law — stipulated in Afghanistan's constitution — blasphemy is punishable by death.

Paris-based media watchdog Reporters without Borders said Afghan justice had again failed to protect Afghan law and guarantee free expression. REUTERS

Workers awarded $80M in 'modern-day slavery' case

CUBA A U.S. court awarded $80 million in damages to three Cuban dockworkers in a "modern-day slavery" scheme between the Cuban government and a Caribbean ship repair company, a lawyer for the men said yesterday.

80 The amount in millions a U.S. court awarded three Cuban dock workers in a "modern-day slavery" case involving the Cuban government and a Caribbean ship repair company.

The Cubans alleged that Curacao Drydock Co. conspired with Havana to force them to work as slaves to fix cruise ships, tankers and oil platforms at the company's shipyard on the Netherlands Antilles island of Curacao. Their attorney filed suit under the U.S. Alien Tort Statute, which allows foreigners to file civil suits in U.S. federal courts for alleged violations of international human rights laws. REUTERS

Thailand **Ex-PM found guilty of conflict of interest**

KEREK WONG/AP/REUTERS

Supporters of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) cerebrate and hold a banner at the Government House in Bangkok yesterday. Thailand's Supreme Court ruled yesterday that former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra had violated a conflict-of-interest law while in office and sentenced him to two years in prison. Shinawatra is accused of having involvement in his wife's purchase of land from a central bank fund.

Brazil **Murdered teen mourned**

PAULO WHITAKER/REUTERS

Teenagers mourn during the funeral of Eloa Cristina Pimentel in Santo Andre, Brazil, yesterday. Doctors said Pimentel, 15, was declared brain dead after allegedly being held hostage for four days and shot by her ex-boyfriend.

Bombing rocks northeast India

EXPLOSION At least 14 people were killed and nearly 40 wounded when a powerful bomb exploded yesterday in India's troubled northeast, police said.

The device, thought to have been hidden in a bicycle near a high security police commando training centre in Imphal, the capital of Manipur state, killed two people on the spot.

It was the most lethal attack in recent times in the Imphal region. REUTERS

Pentagon drops charges against 5 Gitmo prisoners

DETAINEES The Pentagon official overseeing the Guantanamo war crimes court dismissed all charges against five prisoners yesterday, including a British resident who says he falsely confessed to a radioactive "dirty bomb" plot while being tortured.

All five cases were assigned to military prosecutor Army Lt. Col. Darrel Vandeveld, who quit his Guantanamo assignment last month because he said the U.S. government had withheld information that could help clear an Afghan defendant in an unrelated case.

The Defense Department gave no reason for dropping the charges but said new prosecutors had been appointed to review the cases and could refile the charges at a later date if they chose to. REUTERS

News in brief

POVERTY President Bush yesterday said it would be a "serious mistake" to turn inward as a result of the global financial crisis and the United States must stay committed to helping the world's poor. It was in the security, economic and moral interests of the United States to promote international development, he said at a summit on development.

ENVIRONMENT The worst financial crisis since the 1930s may be a chance to put price tags on nature in a radical economic rethink to protect everything from coral reefs to rainforests, environmental experts said yesterday. REUTERS

TELL OTHER METRO READERS WHAT YOU THINK

Whether you agree or disagree with what you read in Metro, we want to know. E-mail your letters to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. **We reserve the right to edit letters.**

Comment & Views

Comment

Castles in sand will sink

TheWestView

Tell me what's wrong with this picture. In my neighbourhood, a modest, two-bedroom, postwar bungalow goes up for sale — and sells for $1 million. The guy who buys it tears it down, puts up a splendid 5,500-square-foot castle and puts it on the market for $2.3 million.

It's still sitting there, unsold, six months later.

There was a For Rent sign on it for a while, but I guess they thought it sent the wrong message, so they took it down.

People stop and peer in the windows as they walk their dogs. They've never seen anything like it before. It's a completely new kind of folly and they find it interesting.

But every day I get up, look out the front window at the Museum to Excess and the bad feeling grows: OMG, this is crazy. Million-dollar teardowns! Palaces on poky suburban streets! We're gonna crash!

There are some who don't buy the argument that the U.S. real estate meltdown will blow the roof down in Canada. But the facts state otherwise: The average price of a home declined 6.2 per cent across the country in September.

The Canadian Real Estate Association reports that declines in Canada's most expensive housing markets will pull down the national average for the rest of this year and into 2009. "Canada's most expensive housing markets" include the Vancouver street where I live, but before you start gloating, Rest of Canada, it also includes Calgary and Toronto, and sooner or later Montreal, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Halifax … did I miss your place?

These days, not even a Left Coast condomaniac is going to pay $800K for an 800-square-foot condo.

The average price of homes in Vancouver is still a ridiculous $535,598. But that's eight per cent less than last year, and perhaps even more significant, sales are running 43 per cent below last year. What's that loud popping sound?

Those of us sitting on a pile of shrinking equity mumble denials like worry beads: Vancouver is the No. 1 city in the world according to the Economist or whatever … the 2010 Olympics will save us … everyone wants to live here. The Bank of Canada will save us, keeping that easy money pipeline open. Etc. But as Bertolt Brecht said: Those who are still laughing have not yet heard the bad news.

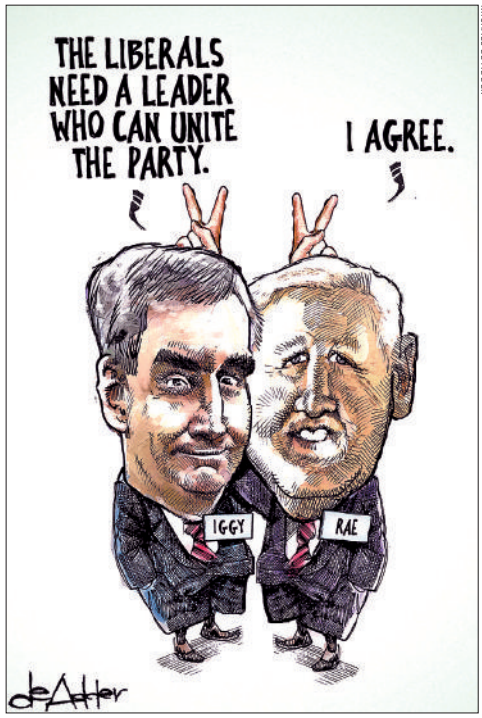
These days, not even a Left Coast condomaniac is going to pay $800K for an 800-square-foot condo (yep, that's $1,000 a square foot), even if it does come with granite countertops!

Maybe never again.

What was that Jimi Hendrix song? Castles made of sand sink into the sea … eventually.

I think "eventually" just happened — right across the street.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist, owner of Sullivan Media consulting, and Editor in Chief of Orato.com, the citizen news web site.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Celebrate entrepreneurs' hard work

By BECKY REUBER

Even more striking is that one in three self-employed Canadians work more than 50 hours a week, compared with one in 20 Canadians who are employees.

It's Small Business Week in Canada, and a great opportunity to celebrate over one million Canadians who own and manage a small business. These businesses create jobs and innovative products and services. They employ roughly half of the private sector work force, and spend proportionally more on Research and Development than their much larger counterparts. Many are proving to be competitive in foreign markets. In fact, Canadian small businesses account for roughly 20 per cent of Canadian exports.

Not only are small businesses good for our economy, they are also beneficial to the entrepreneurs who start them. They can provide income, exciting challenges, and the chance to be your own boss.

However, during Small Business Week, it is important to remember that there are also costs associated with being a small business owner.

One cost is that you have to work really hard. Self-employed Canadians, on average, work six hours more each week than the rest of us. Even more striking is that one in three self-employed Canadians work more than 50 hours a week, compared with one in 20 Canadians, who are employees.

These long working hours can take their toll. Many business owners report feeling isolated. They can't sit around the water cooler and shoot the breeze with their co-workers the way that employees can. Their peers are entrepreneurs working long hours in other businesses and it's difficult to find the time to socialize. They are around people all day, but most of these people are customers, suppliers, or employees who want something from them, and so they're always on.

Finally, many small business owners have money worries. Investors aren't that easy to come by, and most entrepreneurs use their own funds to start and manage their businesses. Two-thirds of Canadian small business owners finance their businesses with their personal savings. Other frequently used sources of financing are personal credit cards, personal loans and personal lines of credit. Entrepreneurs continually need to balance the need for more funds, to fuel business growth, on the one hand, and the riskiness of taking on more debt on the other.

Many small business owners feel in a more precarious position during this year's Small Business Week than they have in past years, due to the recent financial crisis. Many of them worry that their customer base could erode and that funds for hoped-for innovation and improvements will be difficult to come by. This is a great time for you to show your appreciation for their contributions to the Canadian economy by supporting small businesses in your local community.

Becky Reuber is Professor of Strategic Management at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management where she teaches Entrepreneurship and researches Canadian entrepreneurs' growth strategies.

Letters

Chuck Jung, Owner, Banzai Hair Studio, VANCOUVER

Re: "Ladner expects tax hike." The tax burden on small business has steadily increased up to two years ago. Should a small business have to pay six times more than a home that is valued the same? Banzai Hair Studio has been in operation for more than 20 years, employing a staff of 11. Any tax relief is welcome, but we are prepared to pay a fair share. If Vision Vancouver is elected the majority, they will stop the reasonable shift of the tax burden (started by the NPA). Thanks to the NPA, they understand the necessary changes that need to be made to allow small business like ours to continue to operate.

Word on the street

Q. Would you be more likely to vote in federal elections if you could do it online?

Chris Spicer
age 20, Vancouver
"I voted but would switch to electronically because it's more convenient. I think it would result in more youth voting."

Julie Brar
age 32, Vancouver
"I had a busy Tuesday but made sure to vote. I would probably switch if I had the option, it makes it easier."

Alyssa Arbuckle
age 20, Vancouver
"I voted, but a lot of my university friends didn't because they didn't know where to go or had recently moved. Electronic voting would make my age group more engaged."

EBay to ban sale of ivory products
EBay Inc. will ban the sale of all ivory products via its online auction site by Jan. 1, after a conservation group found over 4,000 illegal elephant ivory listings by sellers. African and Asian elephants are protected by international trade conventions. REUTERS

Business

DOLLAR 1.38¢ C$ $82.39 US US$ $1.2137

OIL $70.89 US $3.36

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Business in brief

OIL Husky Energy's third-quarter profit jumped 65 per cent to $1.27 billion as oil prices hit a record high before the meltdown prompted a pullback.

GAS Russia, Iran and Qatar have formed a concensus to set up a permanent OPEC-style gas export group.

MEAT Health officials have cleared Maple Leaf Foods to distribute meat from its Toronto plant associated with a listeriosis outbreak. REUTERS

METRO Vancouver

1190 Homer Street, Suite 250
Vancouver, BC V6B 2X6
Tel: 604-602-1002
Fax: 1-866-254-6504

Advertising: 604-602-1002
adinfovancouver@metronews.ca
Distribution inquiries:
vancouver_distribution@metronews.ca

metro_inquiries@metronews.ca
vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Local:
Publisher, Maryse Lalonde
Managing Editor, Fernando Carneiro
fernando.carneiro@metronews.ca
Distribution Manager, George Acimovic
Marketing Manager, Olga Edwards
National:
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India Preparing for a bang

REUTER/RUPAK DE CHOWDHURI

Labourers work with gunpowder mixture inside a firecracker factory on the outskirts of the northeastern Indian city of Siliguri yesterday. Firecrackers are in great demand ahead of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, which will be celebrated across the country on Oct. 28.

CN Rail quarterly earnings climb

RESULTS Canadian National Railway Co. posted a 14 per cent rise in quarterly profit of $552 million, or $1.16 a diluted share, attributing it to higher rates, fuel surcharges and income tax recovery. REUTERS

Bank of Canada cuts rate

Canadian investors were left hungry for more and slightly confused yesterday when the Bank of Canada surprised them with a meeker-than-expected rate cut, a move that seemed at odds with its bleak outlook.

Most analysts thought that if the bank bothered to cut rates at all, the financial crisis warranted a half point rate cut in a single shot. Instead, the bank shaved a quarter point off its benchmark rate, opting to wait until December before considering another quarter-point cut. It's perhaps explained by signs that global credit markets are starting to thaw thanks to liquidity injections and government help for banks. REUTERS

Brief rally ends

The S&P/TSX composite index snapped a two-day winning streak to close down 455.60 points, or 4.44 per cent, at 9,795.80, on a smaller-than-expected rate cut and falling commodity prices.

Ottawa buys more mortgages

BAILOUT Ottawa said yesterday the government-run Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. agency will buy up to $7 billion of insured mortgages from financial institutions tomorrow, the second chunk of a $25-billion plan to help banks free up cash for lending and overcome credit market constraints.

The government bought a first set of mortgages worth $5 billion last Thursday. REUTERS

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$10 Free Long Distance for every friend you refer.
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comwave One Rate $29.95 /month Unlimited Long Distance to Canada and USA
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By the numbers
Seventy per cent of small businesses that enter the marketplace survive for one full year; half survive for three years. NEWS CANADA

Small Business

A new venture

The top three reasons people start a business are to leave the corporate rat race; to make a living after graduating or immigrating to Canada; and to make a living between jobs or to start a business over 55.
NEWS CANADA

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

'Everyone warned us against it'

If life can come full circle by the time you're 30, then it certainly did for "friendpreneurs" Eryn Green and Tamar Wagman, who met as infants in nursery school, and coincidentally teamed up to launch their baby food business, Sweetpea, in 2004.

"I never thought in a million years that we would go into business together," says Wagman. "We didn't sit there in nursery school writing up a business plan!"

Still, when the inspiration hit, it seemed a natural fit for their skills: Green had just spent five years writing business plans for other companies at Ernst & Young, and Wagman, whose background is in hospitality, had just had a baby and was frustrated she couldn't find healthy and flavourful baby food.

Further they were both at a crossroads: Green wanted to work for herself and Wagman had just quit her job with a catering company and was looking for new opportunities.

Over lunch, Green told Wagman she was looking for a new challenge, and Wagman suggested: "You should make baby food, because what's out there is horrible." Wagman said she and her husband, a chef, were making their own and freezing it in ice cube trays. "Then a light bulb went off over the table," says Wagman. The two started researching, and knew instinctively the market was ripe for a frozen, organic, preservative-free baby food in one-ounce cubes, so parents could pop out the exact amount they needed. Still the two were surprised when their idea was applauded by friends, while the notion of pals going into business together was not.

Sure, going into business with your friends may seem like a great idea, but there are risks to consider, experts warn.

"Everyone warned us against it," says Wagman.

In fact, going into business with friends can be problematic, experts say.

"It can sometimes get in the way of making good business decisions," says Elspeth Murray, who teaches entrepreneurship at Queen's Business School. Especially if it prevents you from making "hard decisions" about friends or family who may not be up "for the task."

"When you complicate the business with friends or family, all of a sudden it's not just business relations that are at stake, but friends, Thanksgiving dinner, the family network — whatever," she warns.

"One of the biggest questions is: How will you maintain the friendship if the business doesn't go well, or the business if the friendship doesn't?" she asks. "You have to have that conversation up front."

Stewart Thornhill, who teaches entrepreneurship at the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business, agrees. Friends entering a business are too often like couples in love: "The last thing they want is a messy legal document," he says. "They're starting out with rose-coloured glasses."

But to be successful, the partners need to spell out what will happen in each eventuality — from how one partner will exit the business, to how a buyout would work, to tie-breaking clauses.

There are plenty of business problems that can stem from friendship, warns Becky Reuber, professor of strategic management at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

In the end, "friendpreneurships" can be risky, Reuber says: "It's everything you would have to worry about when partnering with someone who isn't a friend, plus the friends stuff. It works best if people are at the same life stages, have a demographic compatibility, and complementary skills," she says.

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Singletary named Niners coach
Mike Singletary officially took over as head coach of the San Francisco 49ers yesterday, less than a day after the organization fired Mike Nolan. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Canseco sorry for snitching

Jose Canseco says he's sorry for naming names of fellow baseball players who used steroids. During Monday's A&E documentary, Jose Canseco: The Last Shot, the former slugger says his anger at Major League Baseball prompted him to make the accusations in his 2005 book. "If I could meet with Mark McGwire and these players, I definitely would apologize to them," Canseco said, according to the New York Daily News. "They were my friends. I admired them. I respected them." METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Canucks doubled up again

NHL RESULT

Canucks 2 Blue Jackets 4

VS

SCOTT RINTOUL
scott.rintoul@metronews.ca

THE SKINNY: The Canucks were playing catch up all night as Blue Jackets scored twice in the first seven minutes of play. Recalled right before the game, Kyle Wellwood scored a powerplay goal to cut the deficit in half, but Derek Dorsett's first NHL goal had the home side up a pair with a period to play. Kevin Bieksa closed the margin to one just five minutes into the third, but Pascal Leclaire thwarted a furious Vancouver rally with several spectacular saves to preserve the win before Rick Nash added an empty netter.

THE STAR: The wrong goalie was the showstopper if you're a Canucks fan, as Pascal Leclaire turned in his best performance of the season.

SIZE MATTERS: Two more inches on Ryan Kesler's stick would have resulted in the tying goal as the puck slid agonizingly through the crease while Kesler desperately tried to finish the move he had beaten Leclaire with.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Much maligned for his diet, Wellwood picked up two points in his return to the Canucks lineup. His man advantage marker was just the third of the season for Vancouver's struggling powerplay.

REUTERS/MATT SULLIVAN

Canucks defenders make their way back to the bench as the Blue Jackets celebrate a goal by Derek Dorsett last night in Columbus.

THE SLUMP: The Canucks have now lost three straight games by a combined score of 13-6.

THE NEXT GAME: The Canucks will host the currently unbeaten Edmonton Oilers at GM Place Saturday.

The keys to the trophy: 2008 World Series

TAMPA BAY WINS IF...

They can prove in the first two games in Tampa that they are no longer post-season rookies — which they really aren't any more.

With two series wins including a grinding, exhilarating victory over the Red Sox, the Rays are as hardened as any first-season playoff team can be.

The rotation is set up perfectly: LH Scott Kazmir in Game 1 at the Trop, where he performs his best; James Shields and Matt Garza in Games 2-3 and 6-7 — at home, if necessary. If they get the series back to Tampa they will be very tough.

A win would be a great story for recovering RF Rocco Baldelli.

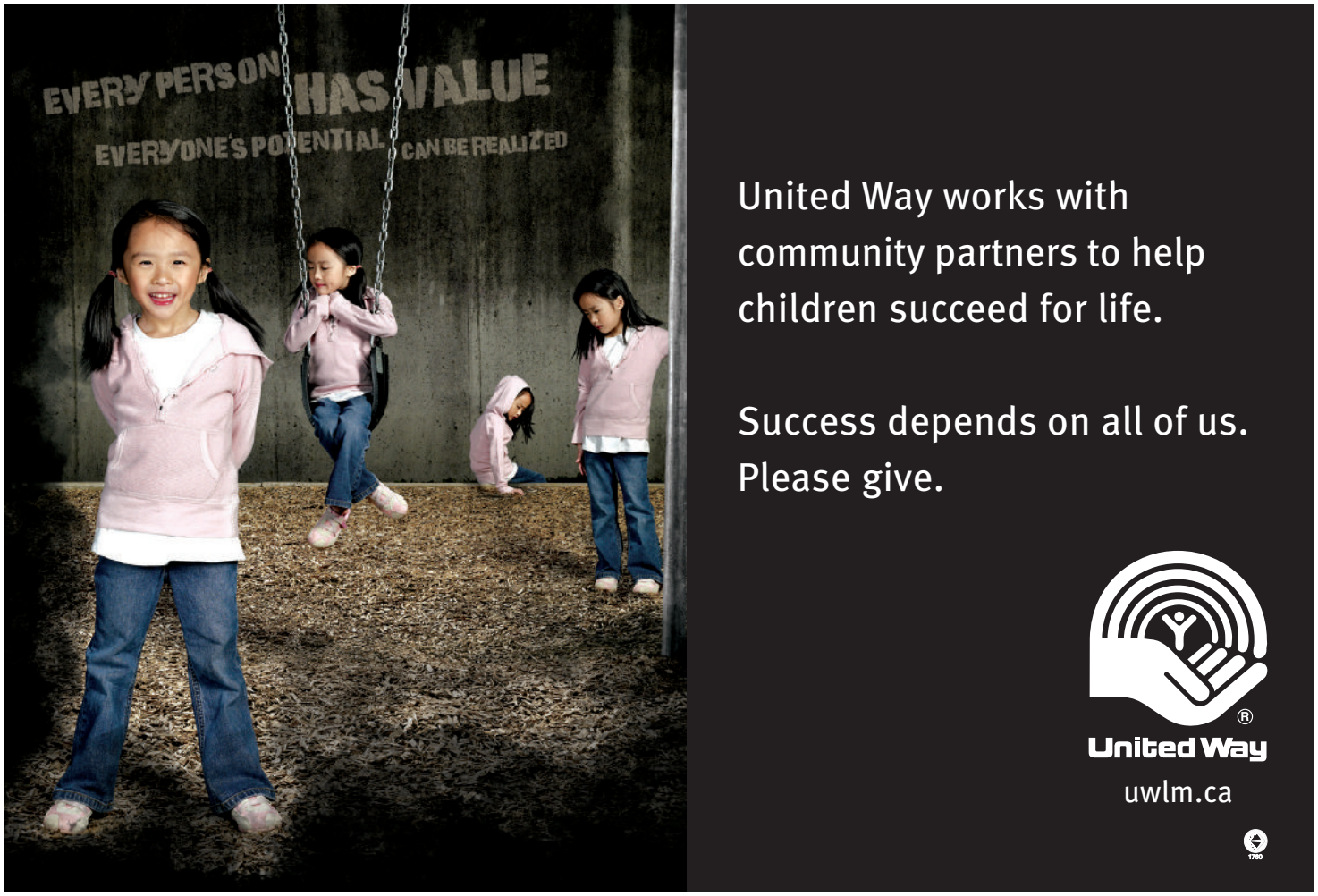
PHILADELPHIA WINS IF...

LH Cole Hamels can have his way and shut down the Rays' young bats in his two scheduled starts against a very aggressive lineup.

His change-up should be more effective than if he were facing a more patient Red Sox lineup.

Ryan Howard, Jimmy Rollins and Chase Utley need to step up and take the pressure off Shane Victorino.

Brad Lidge, on paper, gives the Phils a huge advantage if he can continue his perfect streak of saves. Even with Hamels winning both his starts, the Phils need two more victories to win the series from among Brett Myers, Jamie Moyer and Joe Blanton. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE


EVERY PERSON HAS VALUE
EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL CAN BE REALIZED
United Way works with community partners to help children succeed for life.
Success depends on all of us. Please give.
United Way
uwlm.ca

Lilja has appendectomy

Detroit Red Wings defenceman Andreas Lilja underwent a successful procedure to remove his appendix yesterday. Lilja is scoreless in five games thus far in 2008-09. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Geography out the window?

CFL's playoff oddities could result in all-Alberta Grey Cup

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

The CFL can often be the Complicated Football League, you know, and one of the reasons is its unusual playoff format.

I won't get into complete details here because it's, well, too complicated, but there's at least a reasonable chance the CFL's Grey Cup game in Montreal next month could actually involve two teams from the same province.

Yep, because of the CFL's complicated playoff formula, we could see the Calgary Stampeders and Edmonton Eskimos clashing helmets in the league's championship game Nov. 23. This would be awfully weird, of course.

Edmonton would be representing the Eastern Division. Which raises this question:

Huh?

One of the most appealing qualities of the Grey Cup tilt is that it traditionally produces a geographic rivalry, with a genuine East-West matchup.

Because the CFL's Western teams are so superior this season, however, the division's last-place team will cross over for the Eastern semi-final at Winnipeg. And, if it beats the mediocre Blue Bombers, it would meet the Alouettes in Montreal in the Eastern final Nov. 17. And, if it defeats the Als, this Western team would actually qualify as the Eastern representative for the Grey Cup.

With two weeks remaining in the regular season, the red-hot Stamps are atop the West with 22 points and are Cup favourites.

The B.C. Lions and Saskatchewan Roughriders trail the Stamps with 20 points each, and the Esks would at this point qualify as the crossover team into the Eastern playoffs as the Western cellar-dweller, with 18 points.

All of which explains why an all-Alberta Grey Cup is feasible.

Which is cool, I suppose, if you're an Albertan.

But what would it do for Canadians in general? Would it be of interest for the masses or a turn-off?

CFL spokesman Jamie Dykstra emerged with a politically correct answer for me yesterday, saying: "Our position is that, any time we can have the two best teams in the Grey Cup, that's what we're looking for."

Other CFL sources, however, tell me CFL commissioner Mark Cohon has let it slip in private that he's hoping the Als flourish in the post-season in order to ensure an authentic East-West Grey Cup.

I understand the concerns. But that's life in the CFL. There are always concerns. There are always complications.

For the record, there have been four crossover teams in the CFL since the format was instituted in 1997. None won a playoff game.

But there's always a first. And this year's Esks — or any Western team, for that matter — are strong enough to end the crossover drought and advance to the Cup final next month.

Brace yourself.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

• Metro sports columnist Marty York is reporting that Don Matthews, winningest coach in CFL history, will be dumped by the Argonauts immediately after this season. The sources say Matthews, 69, had a handshake arrangement only to finish this season and has not impressed Toronto ownership enough to merit retention. The Argos are 0-6 since Matthews replaced Rich Stubler in mid-season.

High-scoring day in Champions League

SOCCER A second Champions League double in a row from Dimitar Berbatov helped Manchester United beat Celtic 3-0 yesterday, keeping the European champions on top of Group E.

Wayne Rooney wrapped up the victory in the 76th with his ninth goal in seven games for club and country.

A hat-trick by substitute Joseba Llorente helped Villarreal overwhelm Danish side Aalborg on a night when 36 goals were scored to equal a Champions League record from Sept. 13, 2000. REUTERS

Man U's Dimitar Berbatov, right, celebrates with Wayne Rooney during Champions League play yesterday.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	W	L	OL	PTS
St. Louis	4	1	0	8
Detroit	3	1	1	7
Nashville	3	3	0	6
Chicago	2	2	2	6
Columbus	2	3	0	4

NORTHWEST DIVISION

Minnesota	4	0	0	8
Edmonton	4	0	0	8
Colorado	3	3	0	6
VANCOUVER	3	4	0	6
Calgary	1	3	1	3

PACIFIC DIVISION

San Jose	5	1	0	10
Dallas	2	3	1	5
Los Angeles	2	3	0	4
Phoenix	2	3	0	4
Anaheim	2	5	0	4

EASTERN CONFERENCE

NORTHEAST DIVISION

	W	L	OL	PTS
Montreal	5	0	1	11
Buffalo	5	0	1	11
Boston	2	1	3	7
Ottawa	2	2	1	5
Toronto	1	2	3	5

ATLANTIC DIVISION

N.Y. Rangers	6	2	1	13
Pittsburgh	4	2	1	9
New Jersey	4	1	0	8
N.Y. Islanders	2	3	0	4
Philadelphia	0	3	2	2

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

Washington	3	1	1	7
Carolina	3	1	1	7
Atlanta	2	2	1	5
Florida	2	3	0	4
Tampa Bay	0	2	3	3

LAST NIGHT'S RESULTS

Columbus 4, **VANCOUVER** 2
Anaheim 3, Toronto 2 (SO)
Buffalo 3, Boston 2 (SO)
Tampa Bay 3, Atlanta 2
Calgary 2, Washington 1

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EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Java with integrity

Doi Chaang Coffee couples quality with humanitarian efforts

Small Business

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

B.C.-based Doi Chaang Coffee doesn't want to be known for its humanitarian practices, though it has them. It doesn't want praise for helping a poverty-stricken area of Thailand, though it did. If you're going to buy Doi Chaang Coffee, it wants it to be for one reason: Quality.

"They do not wish to have charity or donations, but they want to be known for the quality of their coffee and they want their coffee to be single-origined, not blended with other coffee," says John Darch, founder of the Thai-Canadian company.

It is an 800-family farming co-operative based in northwest Thailand's Doi Chaang (which translates to "Elephant Mountain") village. After decades of developing businesses in Thailand, Darch took his admiration of the village's self-sufficiency and put his knowledge of the area to work in a rare overseas partnership.

Teaming up with the coffee cultivators in Doi Chaang, Darch decided to bring the high-quality coffee to Canada to sell in a fair trade-rivalling financial agreement with the farmers. While Doi Chaang in Canada finances farming of the coffee, the farmers retain control of all Thai-based operations.

Doi Chaang coffee wants to "ensure a fair reward goes back through to the farmers" in Thailand.

Darch says repaying the Thai people for how they helped him in his business past motivates his altruistic pursuits. "It's a good feeling when I can honestly say we are representing the farmers and that we're not doing this as a charity — it's a commercial operation. Our goal is to ensure a fair reward goes back through to the farmers."

Doi Chaang has a good honour system, commits to importing certain amounts of coffee and prepays for the product before it is delivered from Thailand, according to Darch. However, he says reaching the company's goal is inhibited by the challenge of informing Canadians about its practices.

"As long as we present (the coffee) with integrity and clarity and total transparency, (the Doi Chaang farmers) are very comfortable with that. When (the public) understands the compelling story behind it in terms of quality and structure, we gain their support."

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University of Calgary operates video microsite
The University of Calgary is running a video microsite called U-Now TV. The site features an introductory video with president Harvey Weingarten highlighting innovation at the university. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Respond to concerns

WorkplaceLaw

"AN ACRE OF PERFORMANCE IS WORTH A WHOLE WORLD OF PROMISE."
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Dismissing an underperformer is not an easy task. Court cases clearly state that employers owe a duty to provide employees with the opportunity and means required to improve underperformance, if dismissing them on those grounds. Judges require that employers prove an employee was grossly incompetent, and that progressive warnings were issued, clearly identifying areas of concern.

Therefore, employers seeking to dismiss their habitual underperformer usually follow a prescription for a tidy divorce: create a paper trail documenting any and all allegations and concerns. Typically, this is accomplished by a series of negative performance appraisals. If the employee then wishes to go to war, there is a mountain of evidence to overcome.

For employees faced with a negative performance appraisal, consider the following advice:

- Document your response to a challenged appraisal in writing and request that the response be placed alongside the appraisal in your human resource file.
- Performance appraisals should be remedial in nature. Point out that the standards expected are not objectively reasonable, are beyond your capability, were never communicated, or suitable instruction and supervision were never given to assist in meeting those standards.
- Although remedial, negative performance appraisals usually contemplate corrective discipline, which may eventually support the employer's case for dismissal. Therefore, ask for sufficient time and support to correct any alleged deficiency. State that all of the company's concerns can't be addressed without assistance and while expected to simultaneously maintain a regular workload.

There are ways to challenge a dismissal, as long as you start the process following a negative performance review.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@canadaemploymentlawyer.com.

Long road to UBC med school for aspiring doctor

MONICA MARTINES
for Metro Canada

At 38 and father to three children Amar Gill began his first year of medical school at the University of B.C. this fall.

While he admits switching careers hasn't been easy, he expects the payoff to be worth it.

Growing up in northern India, Gill said he remembers travelling around the country and seeing health problems firsthand. After the birth of his third child he realized that he wanted to be a doctor.

After six years of completing prerequisites courses, volunteering at an old age home and several health organizations, the Burnaby resident was one of 256 students out of about 1,800 applicants accepted to UBC's Faculty of Medicine.

"I'm so happy to be in this program," he said. "Everything about medicine attracts me."

The heavy school load and work on the weekends drafting homes leave him with few hours of family time each week, yet he still takes his kids to soccer practice and games, even acting as assistant coach.

His children Gurramel, 11, Aarjun, 9 and Parris, 7, are always on his mind, even when studying, he said. Family emergencies can complicate the delicate balance with school. He recalls the night before an exam when his son had to be taken to the hospital. Amar spent the night studying in the waiting room.

"This is the life I've chosen. The hardships motivate me to go further. Every time I feel pulled back the same force pushes me forward."

At 38 and father to three children Amar Gill began his first year of medical school at the University of B.C. this fall.

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Shopping tip
Sign up for customer rewards program at stores that you regularly shop at. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Loyalty & Rewards

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

All about choice

Broad range of rewards, including cash, now available

TERRENCE BELFORD
for Metro Canada

Just a decade ago, men and women collecting loyalty rewards across Canada had a pair of plain vanilla choices when it came to cashing in those points: Air travel or a limited range of merchandise.

Today, plain vanilla has morphed into more choices than the front counter at a Baskin Robbins ice cream parlour.

Depending on the program, rewards points can pay down mortgages and personal loans, pay municipal property taxes in some cities, be converted into retirement or education savings or provide a chunk of cash back at the end of the year.

Recipients can rent cars, pay for vehicles, support charities, spend a weekend at a spa, go to a movie or a concert and purchase anything from $25 gift certificates to Vespa scooters and big screen televisions — or even offset all that carbon whooshed into the atmosphere by jet planes.

"For us, it is a matter of meeting customer demand, doing the research, finding out what customers really want and then offering that kind of reward," says Stacey Pearson, associate vice-president of retail products at TD Visa. "We have done the studies of our customers, and what they have told us they really want is two things: Travel and cash back."

The result? TD offers a quartet of Visa cards with travel rewards, two of which give cash back based on total spending.

"At the end of each year, we send out cheques to cardholders in the tens of millions of dollars," she says. "For many of them, it is the happiest day of the year. With the cash they receive, they can go out and buy what they want. There is no need for merchandise rewards."

Lori Gray, vice-president of branch banking for the Ontario region at HSBC Canada, says she would go along with part of that. HSBC customers want travel and cash back, but they also want two other options: Merchandise and the ability to give rewards points to charities.

"Loyalty is all about choices," she says. "Collectors usually decide from the beginning what kinds of rewards best suit them and then start working out ways to maximize spending so they get the rewards they want.

"At our bank, there is a 50-50 split between customers collecting for travel and customers collecting for other rewards, including merchandise, charitable donations and cash back."

At Air Miles, all categories of rewards showed a huge increase in redemptions last year, says Neil Everett, senior vice-president and chief marketing officer at Loyalty One, which runs the program.

"Redemptions are up 13 per cent so far this year," he says. "To date, 94 per cent of all collectors have redeemed for something."

The most popular rewards are gift certificates, including fuel cards, followed by electronics.

Collectors usually start by redeeming for small rewards — perhaps an A&P gift certificate — says Everett. Then they move up the chain.

"The next redemption might be something like an iPod. When they find out how easy it is ... they set their sights higher."

How high? Everett says Air Miles will fill about 600,000 airline seats this year — or one every 3.9 seconds.

At Aeroplan, merchandise rewards are fast rising in popularity.

In 2006, they accounted for 18 per cent of redemptions. Last year, that figure rose to 20 per cent and, this year, it has already reached that 20 per cent mark, says Nathalie Belanger, general manager of rewards management at Groupe Aeroplan in Montreal.

Aeroplan currently offers more than 500 merchandise rewards, including Vespa motor scooters that cost 619,000 miles each.

"We started life as a frequent-flyer program, but are now in the process of recreating ourselves as a more complicated, more sophisticated frequent-flyer and frequent-spender program," Berlanger says.

"To do that, we have added a range of redemption choices, including merchandise, charitable giving, experiential rewards and even a new carbon credit program, which lets members use rewards points to offset the carbon dioxide their flights release into the atmosphere."

Studies have shown customers prefer cash back and travel rewards, as well as merchandise and the ability to donate points.

Just cash, please

Here's a look at five of the top credit cards in Canada that offer their subscribers cash back on purchases.

Capital One 1 per cent Cash Back Platinum Mastercard
- 0.5 per cent cash back on purchases of up to $3,000; 1 per cent back on all purchases greater than $3,000.
- No maximum rebate.

Citibank Enrich Mastercard
- 1 per cent cash back on all purchases.
- Maximum of $250 back per year ($25,000 spending).

Canadian Tire Cash Advantage Mastercard
- 1 per cent cash back when you spend more than $1,000 during a billing cycle.
- 2 per cent back for purchases at Canadian Tire stores and gas stations.
- No maximum rebate.

CIBC 1 per cent Dividend Visa
- 0.25 per cent cash back on annual purchases up to $1,500; 0.5 per cent back on purchases from $1,500.01 to $3,000; 1 per cent back for net purchases over $3,000.
- No maximum rebate.

American Express Costco Platinum Cash Rebate Card
- 0.25 per cent cash back on the first $2,000 in purchases; 0.5 per cent back on the next $3,000 in purchases; 1.5 per cent back on any amount over $5,000.
- Maximum rebate of $500 ($37,000 spending).
- Must have a Costco membership to be eligible.

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Shopping tip

When shopping for travel rewards programs, consider what portion of the cost the program covers. Some rewards just apply to the basic fare, which means you would have to pay extra for airport taxes, fuel surcharges and more. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Building brand key

Keeping customers happy important as market falls

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

As the market continues to plummet, keeping current customers loyal to your brand is likely to become more important than ever.

With less money to spend in a down-turning economy, even the strongest sellers are likely to see a drop in their overall sales, regardless of whether customers stick with their particular brand.

There are some bright spots, however.

When times get tough people take fewer risks, meaning they do tend to stick with reliable brands they know and trust.

Loyalty incentives such as quantity discounts, frequent shopper cards and Air Miles reward points can also have a greater impact than usual as customers look for every savings edge they can get when shopping.

Malcolm Fowler, senior vice-president of Vancouver-based loyalty solutions company Ernex, says that loyalty programs actually become more important as tough times hit.

"It is a common misconception that, in harder times, loyalty programs become one of the first things that are cut from marketing budgets. As the economy continues to squeeze consumers' wallets, consumers will look to spend their dollars where they get the most value — a loyalty program can be a key differentiator," Fowler said.

Keeping current customers happy is a win-win situation financially, experts say.

"As the economy continues to squeeze customers' wallets, consumers will look to spend their dollars where they get the most value — a loyalty program can be a key differentiator." Malcolm Fowler

He does expect retailers will forgo the long-term rewards packages and instead focus more on instant gratification.

"As consumers begin to look toward ways to cut down their expenses, businesses may offer shorter, more immediate rewards rather than focusing on awards that may seem harder to attain," Fowler said.

He also says research has shown obtaining new customers is three to five times as expensive as it is to maintain the business of current customers, so keeping current customers happy is a win-win situation financially.

As long as businesses update their loyalty programs to make sure they are relevant to their customers' needs and tastes, Fowler says customers will come back.

"It really doesn't matter if someone who will never purchase from your business doesn't see value in your loyalty program — it does matter that your best customers do and that the program is relevant to your target market," he said.

Redemption rates rise during the holidays

ERIC EMIN WOOD
for Metro Canada

Thinking about redeeming those reward points this November? You're not alone. Most loyalty programs see their redemption rates go up during the holiday season, and this year, despite talk of a recession, is expected to be no different.

"From a rewards perspective, we're pretty confident that people are going to be using their miles as much, if not more, to get the things that they want for the holidays," says Nathalie Belanger, general manager of rewards management with Aeroplan.

WILLIAM THOMAS CAIN/GETTY IMAGES

Retail programs tend to gain customers during the holidays.

Two-thirds of Aeroplan's four million members redeem their points during the holiday season, says Belanger. Rate of accumulation is roughly one mile for every dollar spent, with non-flight rewards ranging from $50 gift cards (which cost around 6,000 miles) to a 50-inch HDTV (483,000 miles).

Rival Air Miles is no different. "I think the big focus is just people getting smarter about how they spend their dollars," says Neil Everett, senior vice-president and chief marketing officer with Air Miles. "Our program is primarily based on things you need to buy every day, so we don't see a significant change in that behaviour."

The Air Miles reward program includes 14.5 million members in Canada, with more than 100 sponsors offering more than 800 products and gift certificates in every category imaginable. Rewards include the iPod Touch (4,200 miles), a 50-inch HD TV (36,000 miles) and Flare magazine subscriptions (75 miles). Most sponsors offer one Air Mile for every $20 spent.

Neither Aeroplan nor Air Miles see enrolments spike during the holidays. "We typically see about 60,000 enrolments a month," says Everett. "It takes a bit of time to collect miles, so there really isn't an advantage to enrolling at this particular time of year."

Retail programs usually gain customers during the holiday season, however.

"Since the holidays are our busiest season and most enrolment happens in our stores, we typically see an increase in memberships," says Shawn Bloom, Director of Hbc Rewards.

Members of the Hbc reward program earn 50 points for every dollar they spend at any Bay, Zellers or Home Outfitters store. Rewards include Hbc gift cards (a $100 gift card is worth 800,000 points), gas, movies, and even flights.

More customers sign up for Indigo's iRewards program during the holiday season as well, says Deirdre Horgan, chief marketing officer of Indigo. "We see a quarter of our annual members sign up during the November-December time period," she says. Members of the program account for more than 40 per cent of the company's overall sales.

The iRewards program differs from the others in that it's fee-based. Rather than points, consumers are offered savings on merchandise — 40 per cent off bestsellers, 10 per cent off all books in-store, 5 per cent off any books purchased online. More than one million members pay the annual fee of $25.

"The difference is you get immediate benefits," Horgan says. "Books are an affordable gift, and this holiday season people are going to be seeking discounts and saving a bit more aggressively than in the past."

Unique wares on offer at online shops

In a tough economy, there's a "flight to value," by consumers trying to stretch their dollars, says Air Miles president and CEO Bryan Pearson.

Looking for ways to meet the demand, Canada's leader in rewards programs, with 15 million cardholders in 10 million households, now offers online shopping for select consumer goods with big Air Miles bonuses.

That's in addition to Air Miles' existing e-store.

"We often come across really neat products and so we decided to make some of them available to our consumers in such a way that they could pay cash and get rewards miles for their purchases," he says.

The site launched Sept. 21 with four products ranging from $49.99 to $129.99. Each item comes with 50 bonus miles, plus the regular one reward mile for every $20 spent. Using an Air Miles affiliated credit card to make the buy also allows consumers to earn even more miles.

"Fifty Air Miles is the equivalent of spending $1,000," says Pearson. "We see these bonuses as a way to add incentive and create excitement."

The first products on the site were a pocket video cam for $109.99, an indoor grill for $49.99, an iPod boombox for $49.99 and a clock radio and photo frame for $129.99.

"We've launched this as a pilot project and we'll see what response we get from consumers," says Pearson. The plan is to make limited quantities of select products available for short periods and add new ones as they sell out.

"We'll look at anything that's a good deal and good value for our collector base ... items that might not be readily available in retail stores," Pearson says.

Meanwhile, Air Miles' closest competitor, Aeroplan — with more than four million members in 20 per cent of Canadian households — has also made some recent moves to attract consumers.

Started in 1984 by Air Canada as a frequent-flyer program, the company made a shift in 2003 to expand beyond air travel rewards into retail, hotel rooms and rental cars.

In June, the company launched Aeroplan eStore, offering miles for purchases from 90 retailers, including Dell Canada, Toys R Us, Tiger Direct and Chapters Indigo. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Do your homework
With rising gas prices and airline costs, travel points can be a valuable reward. If travel is important to you, look for a card that allows you to redeem for air travel rewards. NEWS CANADA

How to get the most out of your travel reward points

TERRENCE BELFORD
for Metro Canada

Getting the most out of loyalty rewards programs can be a challenge. The range of program options and credit card offerings is huge. In many cases, the number of points needed for big-ticket items can be daunting.

How can the average person make the most out of being a rewards collector?

Here are some tips from a trio of experts: Lynne Kilpatrick, senior vice-president of personal banking at the Bank of Montreal; Stacie Pearson, associate vice-president of retail products at the Toronto Dominion Bank; and Neil Everett, senior vice-president and chief marketing officer at Loyalty One, which operates Canada's largest rewards program — Air Miles.

• **Do your homework.** There is a range of things to consider. First, what kinds of rewards are you most interested in: Travel, merchandise, cash back at the end of the year, charitable giving, money to pay down loans, saving for RRSPs, a credit against your property taxes? Then be realistic. Look at how many rewards points you will need for any or all of these.

• **Look at your own spending and regular travel patterns.** If you seldom get on a plane or if you only put $1,000 a month on that credit card, the chances of getting that dream vacation while you are young enough to enjoy it are slim. Better to opt for a card and a program that offers low redemption rewards like simple electronics, movie passes or gift certificates.

• **If you fly with regularity and on a specific airline, join that airline's frequent-flyer program and get a credit card that offers miles on that airline.** That way you get to double dip every time you fly on that airline or one of its partner airlines and pay for the trip with the card.

• **Think about programs that offer more than a single way to pick up points.** Bank of Montreal offers Air Miles on a credit card, with debit card transactions plus a multiplier if you have other bank products as well. CIBC has introduced Aeroplan Miles with its no-limit chequing accounts as well as offering them with its Aerogold Visa cards.

• **Look for programs with special introductory bonus offers.** Some companies such as American Express Canada and CIBC offer up to 15,000 bonus points if you sign up for one of their products within a certain time frame.

• **Enlist the help of family members by sharing a rewards account.** If life partners and older children are all putting points gained by spending and travelling in a single account, points add up quickly.

• **Maximize your collecting by using the credit card for everything — as long as you can pay outstanding balances every month.** Carry a balance and the interest costs can erode any benefits gained.

• **Consider the annual fee for the credit card and then translate that into how much you have to spend before you are actually ahead of the game.** If you pay $60 a year for a card, that means you have to spend at least $6,000 just to make up that fee in points collected.

• **Think about ease of redemption, especially with travel.** If you plan trips on the spur of the moment, frequent-flyer plans may not be for you. Aeroplan, for example, only has a lock on eight per cent of Air Canada's seats in any month, so last-minute trips may not be possible — unless you are willing to pay a significant premium in reward miles. Other programs allow you to book through a travel agent of choice and pay with rewards when the monthly credit card statement arrives.

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Automotive

A METRO JOINT VENTURE WITH: carguide magazine.com

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Small changes, big difference

The new Acura TL is handsome, powerful and techno-loaded

ROBERT BIENTEMA
for Metro Canada

The Acura TL debuted in 1995 with what would become the gradual evolution of Honda Accord-based efforts, but it's the third-generation version that really caught the attention of Acura aficionados with its techno-loaded combination of angular design and dynamically muscular performance.

Yes, there's been contentment in Acuraville. But if you pressed the TL faithful, they just might admit to a small wish list requesting more of the same — more power, more handling, a more distinctive look and, what the heck, maybe a little more rear seat room while we're at it.

So, with the latest generation design, still handsome as it is, now in its fifth year, a reworking was inevitable. Which was why Canadian automotive journalists trekked to New York for the recent unveiling of the new fourth-generation 2009 Acura TL.

So, let's start with size. The 2009 Acura TL is noticeably larger — 156 mm (6 inches) longer, 30 mm (1.8 inches) wider and 10 mm (0.5 inches) taller. And that bigger body rests on a wider track and a 34 mm (1.4 inches) longer wheelbase, all of the latter applied to a stretch of rear seat room. There's also more trunk room, a larger double-deck glove box, a sliding drawer in the centre armrest and new centre console pockets.

The 2009 Acura TL, bigger, with more power, more poise and now available with SH-AWD or Super Handling All-Wheel Drive system.

The TL SH-AWD model with its artfully exposed all-new 3.7-litre V6 engine harnessing 305 hp and 273 lb-ft of torque.

The size increase results are obvious — more interior room and more poise on the road. Yet the size increase has been managed with minimal weight gain and it has not hampered the TL's inherent sportiness.

Which brings us to power and performance. And the one factor that has always sort of sidelined the TL as the wallflower at the sport sedan dance — front-wheel-drive.

While the European originators of the sport sedan niche have remained true to the balance credo of front-wheel-steering and rear-wheel-drive, also inspiring other Japanese brands like Lexus and Infiniti to follow their lead, Acura remained the only premier brand to dig in its heels and stick with front-wheel power. But as those competitors have begun to push performance further with new all-wheel drive offerings, Acura can now meet them on a level playing field with their own SH-AWD, or Super Handling All-Wheel Drive system.

The 2009 Acura TL will be available in two models — TL and TL SH-AWD

The SH-AWD, available on the TL for the first time, is primarily a front-wheel-drive system that can shift up to 70 per cent of power to the rear wheels under acceleration. In fact, it can shift torque to any wheel. On your favourite twisties, the system can also distribute more torque to the outside rear wheel to create a "yaw moment" to help the TL turn in more quickly and precisely — while also continuously apportioning drivetrain power from front to rear and left to right. There's an obvious reduction of the torque-steering feel inherent to the base front-wheel-drive model and the result is balanced performance that offers more than just all-weather security.

Corresponding to those two model choices are two different all-aluminum VTEC engines. A 3.5-litre V6 producing 280 hp and 254 lb/ft of torque replaces the former 3.2-litre engine. For those of you keeping score, that's an increase of 22 hp and 21 lb-ft of torque while maintaining equivalent fuel economy.

Performance-sedan devotees will probably choose the TL SH-AWD model. Its bored and stroked, all-new 3.7-litre V6 engine harnesses 305 hp and 273 lb/ft of torque and it accelerates with a little more sound and fury than the stock engine. Those are V8 numbers with V6 fuel economy, with power levels up 19 hp and 19 lb-ft over the previous Type-S 3.5-litre.

2009 Acura TL

Type: Premium Sports Sedan
Price: $39,990-$44,490
Engine: 3.5-litre V6
HP: 280-305 hp

Highlights

- Muscular styling
- Front- and AWD available
- Larger than predecessor

Rust control treatments make your car last longer and will save money over the long term.

Rustproofing for the winter ahead

Winter will soon be here again and it's time to think about how to protect your automobile from the deterioration caused by cold weather, snow and road salt. One way is to take your vehicle for a rust-control treatment. Frequently referred to as rustproofing, it's a process of spraying a rust-inhibiting chemical on the underside and inside of your vehicle's body, as well as any other rust-prone areas. Rust control makes your car last longer and will save money.

With today's higher prices for everything from auto insurance to gasoline, most of us are watching our spending. We may not be able to buy a new car every three or four years, which is where rust control can help.

Having your vehicle sprayed annually may well double its lifespan, saving you thousands of dollars. Here's how:

- Your car will last longer, delaying the need to buy a new one.
- If your vehicle is paid for and you keep it for 10 years, you can avoid years of car payments – a potential saving of from $20,000 to $40,000 or more.
- Maintenance costs are lower and your car looks better.
- Resale value increases.

"If you buy a vehicle and plan to keep it for more than four years, consider taking it to a reliable rust control business to be sprayed every year," suggests Freeman Young, president of Krown Rust Control Systems. "And check to make sure that the process is environmentally safe and the technicians are properly trained."

After purchasing a house, a vehicle is probably the biggest item people ever buy, so it makes good financial sense to prevent rust from causing premature deterioration.

An annual rust control treatment for an average car costs about $110 before tax and does not void your manufacturer's warranty.

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*On all 2009 models. Compared to MSRP for 2008, same model. **MSRP for a 2009 Murano 3.5 S AWD (L6RG19 AA00), CVT transmission/ 2009 Altima Coupe 2.5 S (T2RG59 AA00), manual transmission/ 2009 Xterra S 4x4 (8CLG59 AA00), manual transmission/ 2009 Armada LE-V8 4x4 (7CTG79 AA00), automatic transmission/ 2009 Altima Hybrid 2.5 S (T4HG19 AA00), CVT transmission/ 2009 Rogue 2.5 S FWD (W6RG19 AA00), CVT transmission/ 2009 Versa Hatchback 1.8 S (B5LG59 AA00), manual transmission/ 2009 Frontier King Cab XE 4x2 (2KLG59 AA00), manual transmission/ 2009 Maxima 3.5 SV (U4SG19 AA00), CVT transmission/ 2009 Titan King Cab XE 4x2 (1KAG79 AA00), automatic transmission / 2009 Altima Sedan 2.5 S (T4RG59 AA00), manual transmission/ 2009 Pathfinder S 4x4 (5CRG79 AA00), automatic transmission. †$47,498 MSRP for a 2009 Murano LE AWD (L6SG19 AA00), CVT transmission/ $29,798 MSRP for a 2009 Altima Coupe 3.5 SE (T2SG59 AA00), manual transmission/$36,398 MSRP for a 2009 Xterra SE (8CSG79 AA00), automatic transmission/ $30,698 MSRP for a 2009 Rogue SL AWD model w/Premium Package (Y6SG19 BK00), CVT transmission/ $16,498 MSRP for a 2009 Versa Hatchback 1.8 SL (B5RG59 AA00) manual transmission/ $31,798 MSRP for a 2009 Frontier PRO-4X King Cab (4KVG59 AA00), manual transmission/ $39,950 MSRP for a 2009 Maxima 3.5 SV w/Sport Package (U4SG19 SP00), CVT transmission/ $35,098 MSRP for a 2009 Titan King Cab SE 4x2 SWB (1KCG79 AA00), automatic transmission / $29,498 MSRP for a 2009 Altima Sedan 3.5 SE (T4SG59 AA00), manual transmission/ $40,698 MSRP for a 2009 Pathfinder SE 4x4 (5CSG79 AA00), automatic transmission. Destination and PDE charges ($1,500)/ ($1,400)/ ($1,500)/ ($1,550)/ ($1,400)/ ($1,500)/ ($1,325)/ ($1,440)/ ($1,425)/ ($1,450)/ ($1,400)/ ($1,500), license, registration, insurance, duties and applicable taxes (including excise tax and fuel conservation tax, where applicable) are extra. All prices are subject to change without notice. Retailer may sell for less. ‡1.9% purchase financing for up to 60 months available only on 2009 Altima Sedan and 2009 Rogue models. Finance Example for a 2009 Rogue 2.5 S FWD (W6RG19 AA00): $23,798 MSRP, financed at 1.9% APR for 60 months equals $354.89 per month with $5,000 down payment. Cost of borrowing is $995.47 for a total obligation of $26,293.47. Up to $84 PPSA, $1,500 freight and PDE, license, insurance registration and taxes are extra. Finance offers available on Nissan vehicles on approved credit through Nissan Canada Finance. Retailers are free to set individual prices. Retailer order/trade may be necessary. Vehicles may require factory order. Offers available for a limited time, may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers.

How to fight off winter

Preparing your vehicle is a must for cold days

Bone-chilling temperatures, snowstorms and icy roadways are just a few seasonal characteristics that have some Canadians considering relocation when winter hits. And while there is not a lot that can be done to help those that despise the cold weather, the hassle of preparing your vehicle can be made a lot easier with a few winter-fighting tips from experts.

DO:

• Get rid of the lightweight blues (washer fluid, that is). Some plain blue washer fluids don't add up to much more than water and a little bit of solvent, so they can freeze on your windshield when the temps go south.

Instead, convert your first tank of summer wash to winter wash by topping off with de-icing windshield washer. It can clear light ice, improve driving visibility and help prevent dangerous refreeze.

• Change your oil. Motorists that travel short trips of less than 10 miles when outside temperatures remain below freezing should follow a severe maintenance oil-change schedule. While the recommended change interval is 5,000 to 8,000 kilometres, a severe schedule may require more frequent oil and filter changes.

You should consult your owner's manual to learn the interval schedule that works best for your vehicle, and be sure to use a more premium filter.

• Fight the freeze-over. If you are not a huge fan of the exercise that goes into excessive scraping, windshield de-icer spray with a scraper top can quickly help melt frost and ice fast, as well as help reduce dangerous refreeze.

• Prepare for the worst. It could be devastating if you get stranded in cold temperatures. Carry an emergency kit that includes a cellphone, spare jacket, blanket, extra gloves, scarves and water for yourself, and extra fluids for your car.

"Prepare for the worst ... Carry an emergency kit that includes a cellphone, spare jacket, blanket, extra gloves, scarves and water ... and extra fluids for your car."

DON'T:

• Mix hot and cold. Pouring hot water on cold glass to clear your windshield could crack it. Consider spraying your car's windows with ice- and frost-blocker. When sprayed on the night before, the formula imparts a barrier on the glass, thus reducing the adhesion of the ice and frost to the windshield and other glass surfaces, making it easier to clear ice from the windows.

• Leave your gas tank on empty. During the winter, it is important to keep your gas tank at least half full. Filling up your tank helps decrease the chances of moisture forming in the fuel lines and possibly freezing.

Winter tires a solid investment

SAFETY After sampling winter, summer and all-season tires back-to-back on the same roads, season-specific tires are always the right choice.

And avoiding a fender-bender can more than pay for a set of winter tires. Plus, your summer rubber doesn't accumulate kilometres during the winter and vice versa, therefore extending their life almost by half.

Nigel Mortimer, head of recalls for Transport Canada and a veteran Formula Ford racer, gives a reason that makes a lot of sense.

"If four good winter tires are installed, the traction differential between winter and summer roads is less than if the same tires are used all year," says Mortimer.

"Cold all-season tires have far less traction than cold winter tires due to the rubber composition of the tire tread."

In other words, in cold conditions, winter tires allow handling characteristics to be more similar to performance tires than all-seasons do. And, as winter roads can change every metre, ensuring predictable handling is just as important as outright grip.

Tires marked with the pictograph of a peaked mountain with a snowflake meet specific snow traction and severe snow condition requirements.

Tires marked M + S (mud and snow tires), also known as all-season tires, will provide safe all-weather performance, but fall short in severe snow conditions. In addition, M+S tire requirements are guidelines and involve no actual testing to receive the M+S designation, while winter tires must meet performance requirements.

As for two winter tires as opposed to four, Mortimer has done extensive tests with all types of vehicles and comes to one conclusion: Don't put just two winter tires on a vehicle.

"It's unsafe whether you put them on the drive wheels or the steering wheels," says Mortimer. "Especially with anti-lock brakes, traction control and stability controls, no number of electronics can overcome the laws of physics."

Also, winter tires improve grip so that your vehicle will rely less on its electronic systems for traction, in turn reducing stress on other components.

To ensure safety while driving in winter, invest in four winter tires.

Safety all around

- If you only put winter tires on the steering wheels, the rear will have a tendency to fishtail or oversteer.
- If they're only on the rear wheels, the car will understeer.

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Driving in chilly weather conditions

DRIVERS Most winter accidents are caused by human error.

The accident inspectors say that the first snowfall is often the most dangerous since people have not adapted their speed and driving ability to the winter conditions — often losing control and spinning sideways into an oncoming vehicle or stationary object.

So find an empty parking lot or safe place to practice your winter driving skills — or lack thereof. As long as you're not doing hundreds of doughnuts, the local police shouldn't mind.

Anyway, the reason for finding a parking lot is simple: Do you really know how your car handles in the winter?

Think about how you react in a panic stop. Do you jump on the brakes? Try that. Try stopping from the same speed with gradual pressure on the brake pedal.

Then try turning and braking at the same time.

Pay attention to how the car reacts — or doesn't react — to your commands.

"With today's cars the warning is more subtle than the old rear-wheel-drive cars that did not have traction control and stability control," says Nigel Mortimer, head of recalls for Transport Canada.

You have to listen for the tire spin, or watch the speedometer needle suddenly jump, or feel the suddenly lifeless steering to realize that the tires are sliding.

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Malibu's winning formula

Luxurious style and fuel-efficiency make for one great combo

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

North American Car of the Year! It's been quite a while since Chevrolet could boast that honour, but that's just what happened in January when the 2008 Chevrolet Malibu was named North American Car of the Year at the international auto show in Detroit.

To do that, Malibu had to not just match but surpass its deadly rivals, the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord.

Taking a platform engineered by its German subsidiary, Opel, it ladled in the looks, didn't mess with the European-generated ride and handling and then came up with not one, but four Malibus aimed at four different audiences.

The base Malibu LS has a starting price of $22,995. The LT package begins at $24,895 and the top of the line LTZ comes in at $33,610. In addition, the Malibu Hybrid model at $26,995 is the most affordable hybrid system on the market.

Malibu offers two punchy yet fuel-efficient dual overhead cam engines, including a standard 169 hp (160 lb/ft of torque) 2.4-litre Ecotec DOHC four-cylinder engine that delivers 9.6L/100 km in the city and 6.5L/100 km on the highway. The topline engine is a 252 hp (251 lb/ft)) 3.6-litre DOHC V6 with variable valve timing that delivers 12.2L/100 km in the city and 7.8 L/100 on the highway. The Malibu Hybrid model is powered by a 2.4-litre Ecotec engine/electric motor (164 hp, 159 lb/ft) and achieves 8.5L/100km in the city and 6.2L/100 on the highway.

Right now the four-cylinder engines have a four-speed automatic and the V6 has a six-speed automatic. Later this year, the topline LTZ will be available with a four-cylinder engine in addition to the six-speed automatic making that a first in the mid-size segment and something long-distance commuters should love because it combines all the amenities of a luxury car with frugal gas consumption.

The style story starts with the exterior. Visually, the new Malibu looks more substantial than the previous model with the Chevy bowtie logo integrated nicely into the new "family" one-bar grille. Interestingly, there are no less than 12 "bowtie" badges on the exterior, some obvious, others small and discreet like on the headlight bulb reflectors.

All Malibus come equipped with ABS, traction control, tire pressure monitor, six standard airbags and StabiliTrac (GM's version of pitch and yaw control) on all but the base version.

The 2008 Malibu is a giant step forward for Chevrolet, bringing it from just another player in the mid-size sedan segment to one of the leaders by offering more standard content at competitive prices.

2008 Chevy Malibu

Type: Mid-size sedan
Price: $33,610, as tested
Engine: 3.6-litre DOHC V6
HP: 252 hp, 251 lb/ft

Highlights

- Won 2008 North American Car of the Year
- Luxury interior
- Frugal fuel consumption

Like the exterior, the Malibu has shed its humdrum interior look for an almost twin cockpit look.

Malibu also comes with OnStar with the Directions and Connections feature. Directions provides turn-by-turn voice and monitor screen directions to anywhere.

The LTZ tested here is as good as most of the vaunted European sports sedans and not surprisingly so as it is based on the Opel Vectra that is no slouch on the autobahns. Its engine and six-speed automatic with Tapshift sequential manual shift mode is the same as the Cadillac CTS. Drivers can select manual mode which features paddles mounted on the steering wheel.

On the highway, the six-speed goes through the gears so smoothly, you don't feel it. I've noticed before on other GM products with this engine/transmission that on cruise especially, you don't have the sensation of the gearbox dropping down a gear while the engine roars away to maintain whatever speed you have chosen in cruise.

The LTZ lists at $33,610 and is loaded with standard features like the two-tone leather, XM free for three months; OnStar for a year, 18-inch alloy wheels and the list really does go on. The only options on the car as tested were the power sunroof ($1,195), premium paint ($380) and rear 110-volt power point and rear retractable sunshade ($325) for a total of $38,860 including a $1,250 shipping fee.

Porsche, Corvette top green test

RACE A world debut only ever happens once.

And these will be the names to be remembered as the inaugural winners of the Green Challenge at the American Le Mans Series' signature endurance race, the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta held recently: Porsche and its Penske RS Spyder team of Pat Long, Sascha Maassen and Emmanuel Collard, and GM/Chevrolet and its Corvette Racing team of Johnny O'Connell, Jan Magnussen and Ron Fellows. They earned the first ever Green Challenge trophies in their respective prototype (Porsche) and GT (Corvette) classes. Each had the best score in class for overall performance, and fuel efficiency.

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Charger gives more power to the police

The new 2009 Dodge Charger police car is ready to patrol the streets with the ultimate in pursuit power, the new-generation 5.7-litre Hemi V8 engine.

The new engine will give the good guys more horses under the hood and even better fuel economy.

With the new 5.7-litre Hemi, the 2009 Dodge Charger is the most powerful production police vehicle on the road, producing 368 hp and 395 lb/ft of torque.

The 2009 Dodge Charger is the only police vehicle that offers best-in-class performance in four key pursuit categories: available power, acceleration, top speed and vehicle dynamics.

With a fuel economy rating of (US) 16 city/25 highway, the new Hemi engine also gets up to 20 per cent better fuel economy. The Charger is equipped with the addition of fuel-saving Multi-Displacement System (MDS) technology.

5-Door SE model shown, MSRP $16,270

The new incredibly fuel-efficient **2009 PONTIAC G3 WAVE.** Seriously, look at it. That's one fun and friendly looking car. But it really knows how to give the gas pump the cold shoulder. Still, even though 5.7L/100 KM on the highway and 7.9L/100 KM in the city[1] is bad news for the gas pump, it's great news for you. And even better news is that the G3 Wave is loaded with things like optional OnStar®, auxiliary audio input jack, five star rating for frontal impact[2], available side-impact airbags and the best coverage in Canada[3]. So, even though the G3 Wave works really hard to make the gas pump sad, it works just as hard to make you happy. **Cash Purchase Price at $12,398.***

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Winter migration

According to Statistics Canada, Snowbirds are heading south in larger flocks than ever. In 2007, the number of Canadian Snowbirds in the United States jumped to 517,000 from 415,600 in 2006. **TRAVELGUARD.CA**

Travel

The Fall of the Wall

Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and to celebrate, cities from Berlin to Leipzig will host special festivals, exhibitions and events. Visit berlin.de for further details.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Party's on in Reykjavik despite downturn

Icelanders are still going out to party at night in droves regardless — or maybe because of — the island's near financial collapse. Helped by the Iceland Airwaves pop festival now taking place in clubs across the capital, bars and restaurants along Reykjavik's main street are doing a roaring trade.

"Actually when people get depressed they drink more," said Friesteinn Gislasson, manager of the Solon bar, one of the most popular on the main street. "The crisis has not hit us so much so far."

Iceland has been a hip travel destination for young Europeans in recent years because of its offbeat nightlife and cultural scene and natural attractions, including thermal pools and volcanoes.

And although the most notable visitors in town are an International Monetary Fund delegation, Iceland hopes more tourists will come in search of bargains after the devaluation of their currency.

"It is going to be so crowded in downturn Reykjavik, similar to good, good summer days. You will see about 20,000 people in this small area. It is going to be a good party, just like normal," said Aegir Dagsson, manager of the Kaffibarinn.

His small, popular bar, central to the cult movie 101 Reykjavik, was packed last Thursday, with a mostly young crowd and many people waiting to get in.

Arnar Ludviksson, who works at the bar, says "I know 60 per cent of the people that go to this bar, there will be about 200 people here tonight."

In the early hours of the morning, large groups of people are out and about, despite the talk of financial woes.

The Finance Ministry said that Icelanders' debt was equal to two times their annual disposable income. Some see these problems hitting home further down the road.

Icelanders say they are used to crisis and have also become toughened in the harsh north Atlantic climate. **REUTERS**

CHRIS WHITEHEAD

Visitors and locals alike in Iceland see their drinks half-full amid the global economic crisis.

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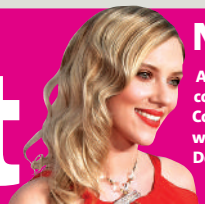
U2 signs new deal with Live Nation

U2 could earn more than $850 million US after signing a new contract. The rock band has made a 12-year deal with promoters Live Nation, which will entitle them to 1.56 million shares in the company worth around $17 million. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Entertainment



Nobel Scarlett

Actress Scarlett Johansson is to co-host this year's Nobel Peace Concert, which singer Diana Ross will headline in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 11. BBC NEWS ONLINE

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Ramsay served Michelin star

PEOPLE Celebrity British chef Gordon Ramsay was served a coveted Michelin star for his new Los Angeles eatery as the Michelin food guide unveiled its second annual lists of top restaurants in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Ramsay, the star of TV shows such as Hell's Kitchen and Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, earned a star for Gordon Ramsay at The London West Hollywood which opened in June, taking his total number of Michelin stars to about a dozen.

In brief

BOOKS Seventy-three authors are up for Canada's prestigious Governor General's Literary Awards, with themes of mortality, war and place figuring prominently in several of the books, the Canada Council for Arts said yesterday. View the list at canadacouncil.ca. REUTERS

Movie sequels abound

RICK MCGINNIS
Metro Canada

A year or so ago, I told the host of a CBC radio program that I thought there should be a rule obliging rock bands to break up after two albums — three if they could make a convincing case that their third album would be a fascinating but unprofitable failure that only made money after years of small but steady sales.

He was apparently scandalized, and it was a long time before I was invited back, but he was the only person who's ever disagreed strongly with my suggestion, and I've come to the conclusion that most people probably agree, though their feelings likely aren't as strong as mine.

In any case, it's a theory that bears application to almost any other creative endeavour, and to movies with what I can only call a pressing urgency.

Summer was once supposed to be sequel season, but those days seem quaint now, as sequels spread throughout the year, and have leapt out of genres such as horror and action to colonize the whole of the movie industry.

The next few weeks, for instance, will see the release of High School Musical 3: Senior Year and Saw V, as well as the latest iteration on the venerable James Bond franchise.

But, before the year ends, theatres will be graced with the premieres of Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa, Transporter 3 and Punisher: War Zone.

Saw V, out this Friday, is just one of the movie franchise additions planned for the next few months.

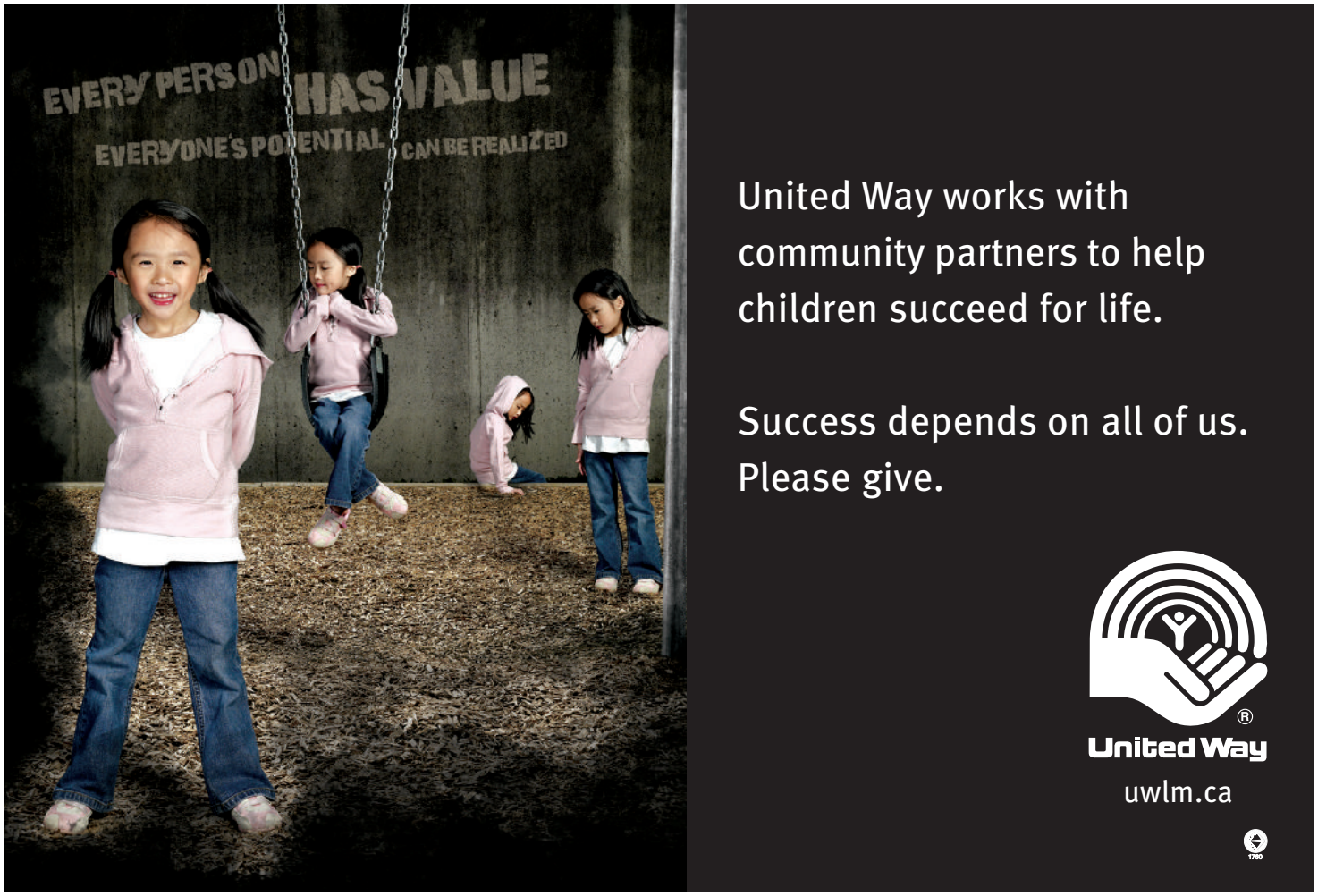
Even if the public at large could, as one, express their wish that the sequel deluge should stop, it has taken on a dynamic that defies mere physics, like perpetual motion or cold fusion.

Steven Spielberg and George Lucas revived the Indiana Jones franchise last summer after nearly 20 years, though the film was met with cynical shrugs and reviews like that of the New York Times, full of phrases like "creative ennui" and "something of a bummer."

The sole defense for sequels that isn't purely fiscal is an essentially cynical one that films such as HSM3 and Saw V are products of original ideas that had sequel delivery written in their DNA.

A more creative defense is that sequels allow actors and audiences to explore characters and storylines at length and in depth has become almost irrelevant in light of the current renaissance of quality television, which is basically making movies many hours long, with huge casts and unprecedented development for even the most peripheral characters.

I am not someone who normally proposes excessive legislation or frivolous laws, but a moratorium on sequels, prequels or remakes might be necessary to shock Hollywood out of its creative palsy.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Rogen says Ghostbusters script would have to be good
Seth Rogen will turn down the offer to star in Ghostbusters 3 if he is not impressed by the script. "That would have to be one motherf—ing good script," he says. IMDB.COM

Life left on Mars?

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD: No one is hiding the fact that pickings are slim on primetime this season, with reduced production and a paucity of scripts thanks to the writers' strike, which would explain why the networks are taking risks on shows that might otherwise have been in the slag heap in any other year.

Neither The Sarah Connor Chronicles nor Knight Rider have been anything like buzz shows this year; the former show has had good reviews but lukewarm ratings, and the latter has had neither, but they've both been given full season orders by Fox and NBC, their respective network homes. Both shows will get to film a full 22 episodes, though whether they air remains to be seen.

The Broadcasting & Cable story on Fox's show notes that the network also picked up Fringe, and CBS gave a full season order to The Mentalist. None of these shows have been burning up the wires with fan action or pulling in real numbers and in normal circumstances the chop-happy Fox would have put them in the wood chipper.

Network panic over gutting what little they have on the schedule is, of course, the glass half empty interpretation of the season; the glass half full version is that audiences are being given a chance to discover shows, and producers have a chance to develop their stories and perhaps even a base of fans, a luxury increasingly rare in the last few years, where pilot overproduction has seen the networks treat their shows like the Soviet Army treated soldiers on the Eastern Front in WWII — cannon fodder, sent into battle with little expectation of survival, and an assumption that whoever made it out alive was tough enough to be sent into the meat grinder again.

I've been using ABC's Life On Mars as a yardstick for this season — a flawed and troubled production, perhaps even a bad idea to begin with, but one that exceeded expectations when it premiered.

The U.S. remake of the U.K. show lost 25 per cent of its premiere audience with its second episode — a drop that would have virtually guaranteed cancellation on Fox a year ago, though the Variety story made no mention of delayed viewing numbers on PVRs and TiVo, and Life On Mars is exactly the sort of show that would attract an audience uninterested in settling down in front of the TV like good remote handlers.

If Life On Mars can survive a few more weeks and perhaps even pick up an audience, it'll be a vindication of fate having forced to networks to play the waiting game, and an unanticipated plus for which the networks, producers and audiences can thank the Hollywood writers' strike.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television.

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Lilly dines with co-star

Pop star Nelly Furtado reveals details of her marriage

HollywoodNorth

Andrea Woo
andrea.woo@metronews.ca

Alberta-born actress **Evangeline Lilly**, who has family throughout the Lower Mainland, was spotted at So.cial at Le Magasin in Gastown last week with fellow Lost castmate **Dominic Monaghan**. While they have remained fairly quiet about their relationship, the two have reportedly been dating since 2004, minus a brief off period, and are now rumoured to be planning a wedding in Hawaii, where the series is filmed, according to femalefirst.co.uk. Fun facts: Lilly was discovered by Ford modeling agency in Kelowna, studied international relations at the University of B.C. and was once a waitress at Earls.

• In a recent interview with Entertainment Tonight Canada, Victoria-born singer **Nelly Furtado** revealed that she got married to sound engineer **Demacio "Demo" Castellón** over the summer, on July 19. The two worked together on her 2006 album Loose, which spawned the singles Maneater, Promiscuous (featuring Timbaland) and Say It Right. Furtado has a five-year-old daughter named **Nevis** from her previous relationship with **DJ Jasper Gahunia**.

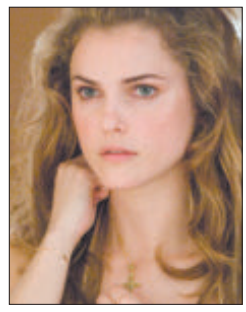
CORRECTION: Last week, I reported that Vancouver-born actor **Ryan Reynolds** is running the New York City Marathon on Nov. 2 to raise money for Parkinson's research, inspired by his father and also by Canadian actor **Michael J. Fox**. What I reported incorrectly — and with infinite regret — is that his father, **Jim Reynolds**, had succumbed to the disease. **Jeff Reynolds**, Ryan's brother, says that while their father is having a difficult time with it, he is very much alive and breathing. To date, Ryan has raised nearly $70,000 for the cause. Contribute at teamfox.org.

Andrea Woo is a Vancouver-based news and entertainment reporter.

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 10/22/08	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Little Mosque	Sophie (N)	CBC News: the fifth estate (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	Knight Rider (N) (CC)		Deal or No Deal (N) (CC)		Posh & Becks: THS		News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Mandarin News		Cantonese News (N)		Punjabi News (In Punjabi N)		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	So You Think You Can Dance Canada (N)			Big Bang Th	CSI: NY (N) (CC)		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	Scrubs (CC)	According-Jim	The Practice "The Blessing"		Third Watch (CC)		The Daily	Diya (CC)	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (CC)		NCIS "Nine Lives" (N) (CC)		Deep Wreck Mysteries		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Robson Arms	TMZ (N) (CC)	America's Next Top Model (N)		Private Practice (N) (CC)		(:02) Dirty Sexy Money (N)		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Secret Life of American Teen		Stylista "Pilot" (CC)		Lipstick Jungle (N) (CC)		EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	America's Next Top Model (N)		Stylista "Pilot" (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds "Paradise" (N)		CSI: NY (N) (CC)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Knight Rider (N) (CC)		Deal or No Deal (N) (CC)		Lipstick Jungle (N) (CC)		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Grocery	Maxed Out	Supersize vs. Superskinny (N)		Gok's Fashion Fix (N)		Style by Jury
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Pushing Daisies "Frescorts"		Private Practice (N) (CC)		(:02) Dirty Sexy Money (N)		News (N)
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Idle Hands ★ (1999, Horror) Devon Sawa, Seth Green.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	Wings-Canada	Secrets of the Dead		Independent Lens The conspiracy trial of the Chicago Seven.				Pioneers-Aviat
	290	382	28 FOX	MLB Baseball: World Series		Cops (CC)	King of Hill	King of Hill	Family Guy	News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	48 PBS	(6:00) Independent Lens		Keeping Up	Being Served	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Secrets of the Dead (CC)	
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	America's Next Top Model (N)		Stylista "Pilot" (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	CW11 News at Ten		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	Will & Grace	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) Kitchen Nightmares		Late Late Show	
news	502	390	29 NW	Monarchy: The Royal Family		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Monarchy: The Royal Family		National
	500	500	40 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	MLB Baseball: World Series Game 1 -- Phillies at Team TBA				Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	SportsCentre	That's Hockey	SportsCentre	In This Corner	UEFA Champions League Soccer Atletico vs. Liverpool. (CC)				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Word Travels	Globe Guides	Pilot Guides "South Korea"		Don't Forget Your Passport		Ed's Up (CC)	Adventures	Word Travels
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score	Sports Rage		Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Out	Wrecked
	416	409	144 GLF	Footballers	Legends	Gol TV News		Art of Football	Art of Football	Paid Program	Kings Club	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Malcolm-Mid.	Home Imp.	Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline	Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Albert-Hallown	Ghosts	Ghosts	6teen	Total Drama	Futurama	The Critic	Chicken	Lucy Devil
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Big Comfy	Rolie Polie	Beren. Bears	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Into the Wild	Meerkat	Chinese School (CC)		Opera in the Outback An evening of song. (N)			Concierto	Montreal Jazz
	575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Ult. Coyote Ugly Search		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24 MM	Justin Timberlake: FutureSex/LoveShow The singer performs.				Punk'd (CC)		Justin Timberlake: FutureSex/LoveShow The singer performs.		
	600	564	26 H&G	Million Dollar Listing (CC)		Holmes on Homes (CC)		Mansions	The Stagers	Property	Unsellable	$1M Listing
	615	520	61 A&E	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Dog the Bounty Hunter (CC)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Parking Wars
	628	584	62 SPKE	The Ultimate Fighter (N)		The Ultimate Fighter		CSI: NY "People With Money"		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Trek: Voyager
	521	560	63 TLC	Kids by the Dozen (CC)		Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate	Kids by the Dozen (CC)		Jon & Kate
	616	522	69 SHO	Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Durham County (CC)		Billable Hours	G-Spot (CC)	The Starter Wife (Series Premiere) (N) (CC)		
	620	523	70 BVO	Arts & Minds	The Achievers	Law & Order "Flight" (CC)		Without a Trace "Deja Vu"		Songcatcher ★★ (2001) Janet McTeer. (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	Real Housewives of NYC		Last 10	Bulging Brides	Work Out "In the Mud"		Real Housewives of NYC		Trading Sp
	520	505	42 DIS	Mayday "Final Approach"		Daily Planet (CC)		MythBusters "Lead Balloon"		Cash Cab	Factory Made	Mayday (CC)
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS (CC)		Cities of the Underworld		The Real Donnie Brasco		NCIS (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Ghost Hunters International		Stargate SG-1 "Uninvited"		Lost "Adrift" (CC)		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	67 TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Secondhand Lions ★★★ (2003) (PA) Michael Caine. (CC)			
	619	525	68 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210 (CC)		Reality	What	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	Family Guy
	603	561	82 FN	Dinner	Dinner	Restaurant Makeover (CC)		Challenge Bartender battle.		Iron Chef America		Dinner
	626	547	97 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Inc.	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	320	621	80 CEN	August Rush ★★ (2007) Freddie Highmore, Keri Russell. (CC)				True Blood (CC)		Dexter Sincere proposal.		The Hitcher
	581	566	101 MTV	Real World-Road Rules		MTV Live	After	Man and Wife	Super Sweet	Real World-Road Rules		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Enigma "Masonic Leaders"		Hope Island (CC)		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	Darling Buds of May (CC)		Paid Program
	-	-	105 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Van. Nights	Iranian Pop	Sabor Latino		Hola Que Tal		Patrol World

critics'corner

August Rush
Heart tugging is an essential element of this drama from director Kirsten Sheridan. Two musicians (Keri Russell, Jonathan Rhys Meyers) who spent an enchanted but short-lived time together are reunited years later. While the reunion happens, a youngster (Freddie Highmore) with his own musical gift tries to find the parents who gave him up for adoption. Robin Williams plays a profiteer who tries to cash in on the boy's talent. 7 PM on CEN



Stylista
If you loved "The Devil Wears Prada" you're going to love this new reality series from the producers of "America's Next Top Model" and "Project Runway." Eleven editorial hopefuls do anything and everything to land a position at "Elle" magazine. While we might not witness the mundane tasks of typing memos or answering phones, rest assured "Elle's" fashion-news director, Anne Slowey, will be paying close attention - someone gets sent home each week. 6 PM on WGN WPX

Craig turns down superhero role
James Bond star Daniel Craig has turned down the chance to portray Marvel superhero Thor on the big screen, saying it would be "too much of a power-trip" to play both 007 and Thor. IMDB.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Paris mulling London move

PEOPLE Socialite Paris Hilton loves life in London so much she is considering a permanent move to the English capital, imdb.com reports.

The hotel heiress is currently in the United Kingdom filming her new reality show, Paris Hilton's British Best Friend, and has been renting a house in London's fashionable Hampstead area.

Now Hilton has admitted that she is keen to move to the city full-time.

"I love it here, I am going to move here permanently," she tells British newspaper The London Paper. "I have already been here for one month and am much, much happier here."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Doherty opens up about private life

PEOPLE Shannen Doherty insists her reputation as an awkward actress is undeserved — she's just keen to keep her personal life troubles away from cast mates and crew, imdb.com reports.

The actress was dubbed a wild child on hit 1990s TV show Beverly Hills, 90210 for showing up to work tired and moody, but now she says it was because she'd spent the night in hospital at her sick father's bedside.

Doherty's dad suffered a series of health setbacks during his daughter's tenure on the show, but she chose to deal with them privately, rather than approaching co-stars or producers for help.

"I'm very private about certain things, and my own cast mates never knew about my dad and his medical problems," she tells Radar magazine. "Nobody knew I was in the hospital 'til five in the morning and came straight to the set. People just thought, 'She's unprofessional.' Back then, you know, if I seemed moody, you try having a father be that sick and calling and saying, 'I don't think I can work today,' and being told, 'No, no, no. You're working or we're suing you.' It's brutal."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Colin shed 44 pounds for Triage film role

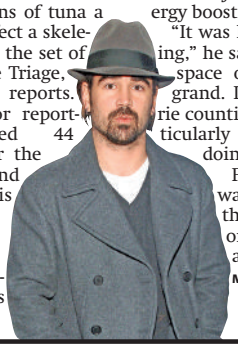
CAREER Colin Farrell lived on black coffee, Diet Coke and two tins of tuna a day to perfect a skeletal look on the set of new movie Triage, imdb.com reports.

The actor reportedly shed 44 pounds for the movie and admits his decision wasn't "healthy" or "advisable." He is said to have needed the caffeine just to get the energy boost to act.

"It was kind of depressing," he says. "For a short space of time, it was grand. It was just calorie counting wasn't a particularly healthy way of doing it."

Farrell insists it wasn't hard to put the weight back on: "I just ate like a pig."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Duchovny suing paper

LEGAL David Duchovny is suing a British newspaper over allegations he had an affair with a tennis coach, imdb.com reports.

Edit Pakay, 28, has been linked with the X-Files star, following the announcement of his split from wife Tea Leoni.

"I don't want to say anything that might hurt David. I am not going to deny it. I don't know what our relationship means to him," she reportedly told the Mail on Sunday.

But Duchovny's attorney Larry Stein says the actor will launch legal action over the article because Pakay "never had a romantic or sexual relationship (with him)."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

celebrity briefs

Hogan's son released early

PEOPLE Hulk Hogan's son Nick Bollea has been released from jail early, imdb.com reports.

The former wrestler's son served just 166 days of an eight-month prison sentence for his part in a car crash in August last year that left his best friend John Graziano with permanent brain injuries.

The 18-year-old pleaded no contest to a felony reckless driving offence in May, following the horrific accident in Clearwater, Fla.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Paltrow helps Madonna

RELATIONSHIPS Actress Gwyneth Paltrow has offered her friend Madonna her undying support as the pop superstar embarks on a divorce battle with husband Guy Ritchie, imdb.com reports.

The couple officially split last week and Paltrow insists Madonna only needs to pick up the phone and she'll be there for her.

"She's a dear friend, and I'm supporting her in all (the) ways that I can," Paltrow tells Us Weekly magazine. "I'm just here for her. I'm just here on the other end of the phone, really. I speak to her a lot."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

FameThrower

Joe O'Neill

Joe's take on celebrities

Can the city that survived The Blitz weather the onslaught of the perfect storm of vacuity? We may just find out, because **Paris Hilton** is threatening to move to London full-time. Bearing in mind that Paris makes pronouncements the same way celebrities with a modicum of talent make movies or albums, and that all of these statements should be taken with an grain of salt and a gram of Valtrex, isn't this a bit of a cruel blow to a city already reeling, as every major city in the world is, from an economic downturn?

I suppose Hilton is smart enough not to bite the hand that feeds her, unless that's what the sex tape script calls for, and the theme of her new reality show, if I may judge from the title, concerns finding her a best friend who is British. However, it's also possible that she feels so happy in London merely because she hasn't yet familiarized herself with British slang and has no idea words like "slag," "slattern," "tart" and "chippy" aren't complimentary.

Should Paris actually follow through on the move, I can't help but wonder whether she might upset the Trans-Atlantic Bimbo Balance, what with **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **Madonna** already living there.

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Thursday
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11° / 7°

Friday
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10° / 8°

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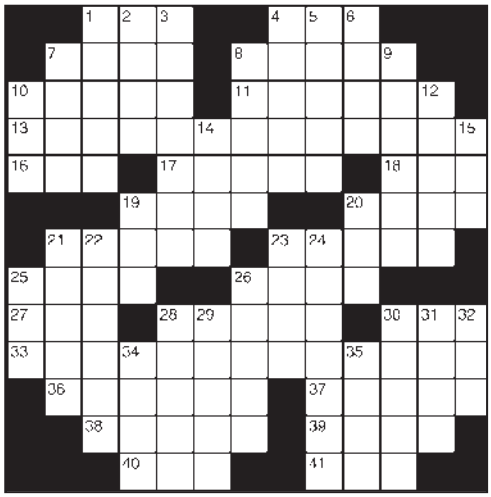

Crossword across

1 Lawn moisture
4 Away from ENE
7 Pop flavor
8 First sign of spring?
10 Rags-to-riches author
11 Mythical sailor
13 One of a bridal quartet
16 Hot tub
17 Bet both ways
18 Chaps
19 Extra
20 They're often connected
21 Wed, commercially
23 Maestro Walter
25 Prohibits
26 Become a member
27 Italian article
28 Disdain
30 Evergreen type
33 A real humdinger
36 Copies, for short
37 Stern or Hayes
38 Minimum
39 Gripes constantly
40 Ram's mate
41 Astronaut Grissom

Crossword down

1 Definitive tenet
2 Gen. Robert —
3 Tusked African beast
4 Squeeze
5 Burn slightly
6 "Dragnet" star
7 Hoofbeat sound
8 Remark to the audience
9 Fish that goes upstream
10 Donkey
12 Because of
14 Command to Rover
15 Type measures
19 "— Robinson"
20 Bradstreet's partner
21 Estate home
22 Body's hardest substance
23 "— Free"
24 Tinnitus effect
25 Schoolkids' carrier
26 Supporting beam
28 Soda-shop item
29 Selected
30 U.N. display
31 "... — handsome does"
32 Fun and games
34 Duel tool
35 Jacob's brother

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	8		5	4	3		2	
1								4
		3				9		
3	6		9		4		5	1
				3				
8	1		6		7		9	3
		8				4		
9								2
	5		2	1	9		8	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

9	2	8	1	5	3	7	4	6
4	7	1	9	6	2	3	8	5
6	5	3	4	8	7	9	2	1
5	6	7	3	2	9	4	1	8
2	8	9	6	4	1	5	7	3
1	3	4	5	7	8	2	6	9
7	1	2	8	9	5	6	3	4
3	4	5	7	1	6	8	9	2
8	9	6	2	3	4	1	5	7

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min.....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Recipe of the day

Quick steamed pork supper

INGREDIENTS:

¼ lb (280 g) even-sized new potatoes, scrubbed
6 oz (175 g) pork tenderloin
1 tbsp (15 mL) light soy sauce
1 tbsp (15 mL) dry sherry
1 tsp vegetable oil
2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
½ tsp (2 mL) ground allspice
1 zucchini, cut into fine julienne sticks
1 red pepper, deseeded and thinly sliced
5 oz (150g) snow peas

METHOD:

1. Steam potatoes for 10 minutes. Remove and leave until cool enough to handle.
2. Trim fat from pork. Cut across into an even number of slices, each about ½ in. (1 cm) thick. Mix soy sauce, sherry, oil, ginger, allspice and pepper in a bowl. Add pork and toss to coat with the mixture.
3. Place 2 pieces of foil, each about 12 in. x 8 in. (30 cm x 20 cm) on work surface. Thinly slice steamed potatoes and spread out on half of each foil piece, leaving a border of at least 1 in. (2.5 cm) around edge. Arrange pork slices on top and pour over juices. Scatter zucchini and peppers on top.
4. Fold the other half of each foil rectangle over top and make small overlapping folds along edges to seal. Place foil parcels in the steamer basket and steam for 15–20 minutes, until meat and vegetables are cooked. About 4 minutes before the end of the cooking time, add snow peas to water in the pan under the steamer.
5. Transfer cooked parcels to warmed plates, open to reveal contents and serve with drained snow peas.

SERVES 2

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!
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Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You can stay in bed or you can get ahead. Don't be too timid to refuse a strategy change. A favour done for a friend will bring you money.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Your ethical actions will live on for years. Prepare to perk up this afternoon. A nonconformist should avoid caffeine and stop talking.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Your career luck is at the crossroads. A blonde knows who is really to blame. Be very serious when a fantasy romance takes flight.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Learn how to meditate when a meeting is boring. Show that you have what it takes to be frugal. Dreams about a duty will be tiring.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
It's time to congratulate other people. A buddy guides you through a secret conspiracy. Trust your instincts before getting involved.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
The distortion of facts creates new responsibilities. A moment of greatness will interrupt a trip. A hero will respond to messages.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
It's a good time to make an amusing statement. Someone who's just starting out goes for broke. An unusual program comes under review.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A bold stranger comes your way tonight. Unleash the power of your daydreams. A friendship will charm and please you as it plays out.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
The power of positive thinking is shared with a family. You have to deal with a beautiful stranger. Pursue the meaning behind a comical tale.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Someone wants to see you back down. Vexing frustration can lead to a comforting squeeze. A maternal figure muses about disorder.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Tolerate anybody wearing unusual clothes. Discuss an older woman with a busy buddy. Take a chance and do what has to be done.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A troubled younger person will get a harsh lecture. A guilty companion throws her weight around. An ally is waiting for you to open up.

WORDY GURDY

BY TRICKY DICKY ZANT

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE®, and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Columnist Landers' moving trucks (2)
2. Athlete's fish with a bagel (2)
3. Actress Stubbs promoted (2)
4. Put up for sale a strongbox (2)
5. Swaps razors' cutting edges (2)
6. More anesthetized beak fixer (2)
7. Skeleton's platform heels-over-head maneuver (2)

This day in history

OCT. 22, 1797: One thousand metres (3,200 feet) above Paris, André-Jacques Garnerin makes the first recorded parachute jump.
OCT. 22, 1924: Toastmasters International is founded.
OCT. 22, 1957: Vietnam War: First United States casualties in Vietnam.
OCT. 22, 1968: Apollo program: Apollo 7 safely splashes down in the Atlantic Ocean after orbiting the Earth 163 times.
OCT. 22, 1976: Red Dye No. 4 is banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration after it is discovered that it causes tumours in the bladders of dogs. The dye is still used in Canada.

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